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ZAMBESI BASIN AND NYASSALAND







THE AUTHOR IN ARAB COSTUME.

# THE ZAMBESI BASIN

AND

# NYASSALAND

BY

DANIEL J. RANKIN

F.R.S.G.S., M.R.A.S.

*WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS*

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THE  
ZAMBESI BASIN AND NYASSALAND.

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CHAPTER I.

A VOYAGE TO BLANTYRE.

GEOGRAPHICAL RESEARCHES—ARRIVAL AT THE ZAMBESI MOUTH—  
—EMBARKATION ON THE SALOON STEAMER LADY NYASSA—  
DESCRIPTION OF ACCOMMODATION—THE FIRST DINNER—THE  
LOWER ZAMBESI—METHOD OF PURCHASING FOWLS—SANITARY  
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A NIGHT UNDER DIFFICULTIES—ARRIVAL AT MAZARO—MR  
SAMPSON, THE AFRICAN LAKES' AGENT, AND HIS STATION—  
PLEASURES OF A ROOF OVER US.

CAPTAIN FOOT, R.N., having been appointed as first British Consul for Central Africa, desired me to form one of his party, which comprised the gallant captain's lady, Mrs B., the nurse, and two children, Claudia and Hammond, of two and three years, Mr G., and a young blue-jacket named Winton, chosen by the captain.

We were to proceed to Lake Nyassa. We left England in October 1883. We alleviated the monotony of our voyage out by diligent geographical researches to discover the precise locality of our destination. Existent maps, showing here and there an elephant on a castle, proved of little utility, and, after six weeks' voyage, we decided that the direction of our travels would be, as near as we could calculate, due west from the East Coast, which would in all probability, except for unforeseen eventualities, land us in the neighbourhood of Central Africa. On our arrival at Quillimane by the mail-steamer, Fortune proved propitious in placing there a small tug-boat—a phenomenon which had seldom happened before in the history of that town. We thus immediately trans-shipped from the ocean-boat *en route* for the Kongoni entrance of the Zambesi, fifty-five miles south.

We left Quillimane in the early morning in the tug Lion, and at four o'clock in the afternoon anchored opposite the Kongoni mouth. We were drawing six feet; but as it was low tide at the time of our arrival, there were only two feet on the bar, and we had consequently to wait

until the next morning to go over at high water. By eight we were inside, anchored three hundred yards from the beach.

On three sides the land horizon was limited by low lines of leafy mangroves, whose slime-bedaubed tendrils rose out of a light-coloured ooze, impregnated with vegetable and maritime *débris*.

Two channels led into the great Zambesi. From the seaward the dull reverberation of an unbroken line of surf rolled over the waters in a ceaseless monotone. At mid-day the air was aglow with a white tremulous heat, through which the vegetation on shore appeared in wavy indistinct lines. The hippopotami sought the deepest and coolest pools, crocodiles left the baked mud on the banks, and men and animals retreated under the protecting shade of roofs and trees. All nature around succumbed to the influence of the blazing furnace overhead, and indulged in a compulsory siesta. It is impossible, indeed, to convey any idea of the malignant fierceness of a tropical sun to those accustomed to a red disc casually appearing behind a London fog. To see the sun on this side of the globe is to hail him as a retiring but most welcome friend. In

the tropics he throws off his disguise and becomes a merciless and vindictive enemy.

The *Lady Nyassa*, which was to take us into the interior, was awaiting us half a mile away, and we could just see the top of her funnel over a mud-bank. She was a paddle-steamboat, advertised in Glasgow as a saloon-steamer. She belonged originally to the Scottish Mission, for whom she was subscribed by Sunday-school children. She was eventually relegated to the African Lakes Company, to enable them to carry out more effectually their well-known philanthropic and missionary enterprise. We had heard so much of this craft at home that, although we had comparative comfort on board the tug, we were naturally all anxious to change our present quarters for the superior accommodation of the *Lady Nyassa*.

Our baggage and gear were sent on in boats, and in a couple of days all our chattels had been transferred to her, so that we bade good-bye to the captain of the tug, and rowed over with Mrs Foot, the nurse, and children, to be in time for dinner on board our new home.

We did not see the *Lady Nyassa* until we had rounded the mud-bank, when she was dis-

covered. We were not greatly impressed by the first sight of the vessel, though doubtless this was owing to our having been accustomed for so long to the ocean-liners. Running our boat alongside, we boarded her. In the stern was a ragged, discoloured piece of canvas stretched over what appeared to be a box with the lid off fixed in the deck. Two-thirds of the boat in the centre were taken up by an engine and boiler, on which were four negroes scraping off the top layer of rust. The rest of the boat was a triangle in the bows about six feet by eight. On this triangle was a deck, on the deck were two goats and two kids browsing on the grass that grew in the seams, and a hen-coop full of fowls gave the place quite a homely and rural aspect. Mr Gouk, a carpenter by trade, who fulfilled the offices of captain, engineer, purser, &c., on the steamer, we found on the smoke-box with a plate of rice and a boiled fowl on his knees, evidently dining.

Mrs Foot, the nurse, and children being tired, were anxious to go down into the saloon. After we had wandered wearily several times round the piece of canvas in the stern, a messenger was de-

spatched to inquire of the captain its exact locality—the ladies meanwhile resting on an empty hen-coop which was fortunately handy. The captain having now finished his dinner, was at liberty to attend to the requirements of his passengers. He expressed great astonishment at their perplexity, and in a very short time acquainted us with the startling economy and admirable compactness of the Zambesi liner. One or two blankets at the bottom of the box in the stern made up most excellent sleeping accommodation for the ladies; one half of this space, however, we were informed, was set apart for baling purposes to keep the steamer afloat. At the entrance several feet of boarding were taken away, and the iron bottom exposed, which looked considerably worm-eaten. In this stood a negro baling with a tin pannikin. To ensure greater privacy a shawl came in useful to make a partition, so that in a very short time we were enabled to leave the ladies to recuperate themselves after the fatigue of the day and prepare their toilet for dinner.

We were then informed by the captain that the dining-saloon and the male passengers' sleeping accommodation were forward. The saloon



we reached after a perilous journey over the smoke-box, and had no difficulty in fixing upon the farmyard as the precise site.

We had conversed little since our arrival on board, for Winton having given a forcible expression to his feelings, so pained a look came over the captain's face on hearing it, that we desisted for his sake from making any further audible comments.

We rested on the boiler while a negro swept up the saloon. The goats and the kids were relegated to the stoke-hole, six inches below us ; the hen-coop was tied up at the point of the triangle in the bows, the same distance in front of us. Around the sides were several logs used as fuel for the steamer ; these, we found, made excellent *fauteuils*, after having dusted off the more intrusive scorpions and other vermin of an equally noxious nature. We sat on these logs for some minutes in a state of profound meditation, till at last Winton expressed an opinion that it was time the bell rang for dinner. We then ventured to ask the captain, who was superintending the scraping on the boiler, what there was to eat, and were told two cuckoos were roasting in the furnace. We had not tasted

cuckoos before, but anything appeared appetising at that moment.

Captain Foot went aft, and a few minutes afterwards returned leading his lady and the nurse, the children being left fast asleep. We arranged ourselves around the sides of the triangle, waiting for the appearance of the cuckoos. By this time the sun had gone down. The sky overhead was brilliant with stars. Hippos splashed alongside, thundering their gruff cachinnations. Half an hour of twilight and we were covered in pitchy darkness. The air was filled with the noise of myriads of insects buzzing and whirring in the neighbouring swamp. The gaunt stems of the mangroves were lit up by swarms of fireflies, whose great brilliancy made them appear like stars of the first magnitude. I caught one, and by holding it between my finger and thumb could easily tell the time by its light, or read a letter by passing it along the lines. Two candles were brought by a negro. He melted their ends and stuck them on the deck between us. The air was perfectly still. Tin plates were put round at our feet, one opposite each person. A distinct aroma of cooking told us that our cuckoos were nearly ready. No sooner, however,

had the candles been placed on the deck than we were besieged by innumerable armies of creeping things—flying cockroaches, ants, bugs, moths, earwigs, mosquitoes and several other varieties of the same family. Each candle soon became a crematorium, with a heap of scorched bodies piled up around it. Our plates were filled with vermin. We sat in agonised misery, which no amount of scratching or rubbing could alleviate. They crawled down our necks, and up our legs and arms, until the more sensitive of us felt like jumping overboard. The cuckoos came on, and we were relieved to find that they had been transformed into the homely fowl.<sup>1</sup>

Our dinner consisted of the two aforesaid fowls, whose dimensions would have insulted an ordinary English bantam. These were to be divided among six hungry people! A large plate of boiled rice and two or three captains' biscuits looked more sustaining if not inviting; but with the quantity of the insects seasoning each dish we could find no fault, and they certainly went a great way to satisfy our inner cravings. It was useless taking them out of the food in which

<sup>1</sup> The natives, we found afterwards, called a fowl a cuckoo, spelt *kuku*.

they swarmed, so we were obliged to eat them with our eyes shut and susceptibilities stifled. A tin mug of weak tea finished our meal, when Mrs Foot and the nurse retired aft, lighted by the two candles, which were now getting very low.

Every available corner on the boiler, stoke-hole, and taffrail was occupied by a sleeping form, from whom issued a sonorous and somniferous melody, to which the falsetto scraping of the pannikin baling in the saloon formed an appropriate accompaniment. We commenced arrangements for turning in. We had fortunately each a blanket, and by dint of careful management, and two chunks of firewood to keep the outside passengers from falling overboard, we succeeded in obtaining space to lie down, go to sleep, and dream of home.

Towards morning it grew very chilly, and our blankets were saturated with moisture from the heavy dew. About 5.30 we were awakened by a terrible sound, which brought us all to our feet. It proceeded from the hen-coop, from which a vociferous rooster was craning his neck over our heads. The steamer and river were covered in a dense damp mist. A few of the

negroes were stretching themselves, sitting up rubbing their eyes, yawning, and drawing dirty pieces of calico over their shoulders to protect them from the chilly atmosphere. A stoker was filling up the furnace with logs of wood preparatory to firing. In an hour's time we could hear the rumbling of water in the boiler, and hissing of the steam in the valve, while the furnace-door gave out a heat which, although pleasant on a cold morning, boded ill for our comfort at mid-day. From a dirty kettle singing on the embers we obtained a mug of diluted coffee. The sun rapidly cleared away the thick mist. As soon as the banks were discernible the anchor was weighed, tied up to the mast, as there was no room on deck, and a native with a long bamboo pole mounted the hen-coop.

Mr Gouk, now engineer, was seated on the deck, his legs dangling in the stoke-hole, superintending the engine. A lever was touched, the paddles turned round with spasmodic revolutions, and we were off. The negro with the pole in front, balancing himself with considerable adroitness, plunged the bamboo into the water to indicate the depth. When it grew shallower than usual, as it seemed always to be doing, he shrieked

out with exasperating vigour, "*Madzi pangono*," which we afterwards learnt meant "Not much water," though at first it was a source of considerable anxiety to us, as we thought that it portended some imminent and unknown peril. This feeling, however, wore off as we went along without any appreciable disaster.

By the time the mist cleared away we had arranged the forward saloon for the reception of Mrs Foot, the nurse, and children, making the chunks of wood as comfortable as their nature admitted.

The lower reaches of the river were walled in on either side by dense unbroken jungles of mangroves. From dank beds of reeds, their roots embedded in a fetid slime, arose poisonous and foul-smelling effluvia, to breathe which oftentimes caused the most malignant fevers. These malarial dens were the favoured haunts of the loathsome crocodiles and venomous green snake, who on our approach slithered down out of sight into the mud-coloured stream. Flamingoes, pelicans, and a variety of storks, eyed us sedately and in a critical attitude as we puffed along. At times we wended our way through schools of twenty



IN THE AFRICAN FOREST.





or thirty hippos, many with their young on their shoulders.

The day passed without any incident worthy of comment, and we looked forward with little pleasure to enduring the miseries of the coming night. To ward off the fierce sun we had put up a small sail. The third day was Sunday. The country had undergone a considerable change. The slime and swamps were left behind, and in their place were sandy beaches. On the banks were groves of palms, clumps of bananas, plantations of mangoes and oranges, and every now and then a village of brown bee-hived huts.

From the top of the high banks groups of natives watched us curiously. Here and there the dusky arm of a maiden appeared out of the reeds, and a pleasant voice from the vicinity said "Cuckoo," upon which the engines were reversed with the utmost promptitude, and passengers and captain, holding out tempting bunches of beads, made every endeavour to be the first to capture the prize. We did not think this always considerate on the part of the captain, who, from his knowledge of the language, we had grave reasons for suspicion, made unfair overtures: however, after we had once or twice been de-

frauded out of the toothsome cuckoo, which meant our dinner, we found it most successful, when the captain held out one bunch of beads, for us to hold out two. This never failed, and obliged the captain at last to come to an amnesty, and he henceforth became commissary-general, to the mutual advantage of the larder.

One characteristic of this Zambesi liner that greatly impressed us was the absence of any incongruity in its arrangements for the convenience of passengers. I speak mainly now of sanitary arrangements, so dear to every Englishman, and which became dearer to us as the voyage progressed, from distant memory. Our bathroom, lavatory, and whatnot comprised the small space in front of the paddle-box, before which in the early morn we were accustomed to put up the sail that sheltered us during the night, and perform our toilet in the unsophisticated African manner. This necessary ceremony was not undergone without considerable personal risk. There were five narrow planks in the triangle outside by the paddle-box. Of these five planks, three were missing and the other two were suspicious. The ladies, however, were better provided for. Mrs B., the nurse,

utilised the space open for baling by making it a most efficient bath for the children in the bilgewater, purified as it was by the lumps of charcoal that dropped from the engine-room forward, and which doubtless, from a medicinal point of view, greatly increased the efficacy of the bath.

As it was the middle of the rainy season, we could hardly hope to escape altogether from the wet. Each day heavy black clouds floated in different parts of the sky, pouring down their load of water, until they melted away from sheer exhaustion. Sometimes four or five of these isolated storms were visible at once; but by good fortune, or the skill of the navigating officer on the hen-coop, we succeeded in steering our way between them. On this Sunday afternoon, however, a dense inky cloud made directly in our direction. Fuel was hastily flung into the furnace, the dampers drawn out, and the fire roared and fumed. The stokers showed the most praiseworthy zeal. The captain and passengers anxiously fixed their gaze on the indicator, watching the rising pressure of steam. The paddles threw off their accustomed lassitude and frantically beat at the water. We dashed madly ahead with the storm in chase. Our

speed had increased at least two miles an hour, our average being three. The captain's face paled with excitement and anxiety as the warning hand of the indicator pointed to a pressure of fifty pounds. His hand sought convulsively the escape-valve, and we feared each moment the dissolution of the palpitating boiler. The fuel, however, under the forced draught rapidly burnt out, the hand of the indicator fell, and the paddles grew tired and disheartened, so that in spite of the most strenuous efforts of every one on board we were overtaken. Considering the incident since, uninfluenced by the excitement of the momentous issue then at stake, we have come to the conclusion that, from a mathematical point of view, escape was hopeless from the first, the storm having had probably a velocity exceeding sixty miles an hour. Such a speed was of course considerably in excess of the utmost we could reasonably hope to get out of our craft, without an almost certainty of putting too great a strain on the boiler. A hurried meeting of the passengers was convened, and it was unanimously agreed that a testimonial on vellum should be presented to the captain expressing their gratitude and appreciation of the commendable pru-

dence and extraordinary skill shown by him under such anxious and trying circumstances; and it was further proposed that as soon as a goat was killed the skin should be dried, to supply the necessary vellum for this testimonial. A sharp squall struck the vessel, followed by a chilly wind. The sail was blown overboard and barely saved before it floated away astern. Mrs Foot, the nurse, and children at once retired aft to protect themselves from the coming rain, under umbrellas, in the sleeping compartment. The rain poured down on us pitilessly, hissing and spitting as it fell on the heated boiler.

The remaining few pounds of steam brought us up under the lee of a high bank two hundred yards away, where we were well protected from the worst of the wind and able to re-erect our awning. We huddled up together in our blankets. The water streamed down through the rents in the sail overhead, and we passed the time in contemplating the scarcely more wretched situation of the stokers, who were crouched over the smouldering embers, their hands on their shoulders to protect them from the impact of the raindrops which went coursing down their naked backs. There was just enough fire to give the

ladies and ourselves a cup of tea each, which with a few biscuits was all the dinner available till the next day. The night came over rapidly, and was pitchy dark; not a star was visible in the whole firmament. The steamer was leaking worse, and two men were sent to bale all night in the saloon. The monotonous scoop, scoop of the pannikins on the iron bottom, and the patter of raindrops, were scarcely drowned by the deafening din of an orchestra of frogs on shore. The ladies and children slept under four umbrellas, and these served somewhat to keep off the rain trickling down from the rotten canvas roof of the saloon, while we eventually rolled over in our wet blankets on the damp deck and passed the night as comfortably as things permitted.

The next morning was brighter, and bed and clothes were hung up on lines to dry in the early sun. At ten o'clock we sighted Mazaro, a station of the African Lakes Company. As the steamer had given such unmistakable signs of a vicious and dogged determination to go to the bottom, it was found necessary to unload and attempt some repairs before proceeding farther. Boxes, fire-bars, goats, wearing apparel, fowls, blankets, and cooking utensils were flung indiscriminately

on to the bank. The passengers, headed by Captain Foot, marched in single file on shore.

The station was fifty yards from the river in front of us,—a long ramshackle kind of a barn, built on posts, three feet above the ground. Its walls were mud-and-wattle; the huge overhanging roof of grass and reeds; a verandah in front, with a mud floor. There was no enclosure of any kind. In the open space in front were several emaciated pigs, sportively gamboling on the grass, and facetiously putting into a state of terror some bony fowls and sinewy ducks. I had little doubt in my own mind that the architect in building this place was designing a cowshed; but not being able to find a cow so lost to every sense of bovine dignity as to thrive in such surroundings, it was found to be suitable for nothing better than an agent's residence. It often occurred to me afterwards, in visiting other stations; that that architect was employed very extensively in Africa.

The agent in charge, Mr Sampson, was standing in the verandah awaiting our arrival. He was a small-built man, with an attenuated and sun-dried countenance that spoke only too clearly of years of malaria and fever. He was dressed

in a soiled nankeen suit, which had the appearance of having been his constant dwelling-place from some remote epoch before every one else's childhood. His feet were enwrapped in carpet slippers worn down at the heels. A well-gnawed pen behind his ear completed his costume. He expressed no surprise at our arrival. We were merely passengers. We were hungry. We were wet and miserable. We longed for a dry spot to revel in for only a brief space. Witnessing such wretchedness and misery in our fellow-creatures with unvarying monotony must eventually make the most compassionate callous, and I could not in my heart blame Mr Sampson. He simply said, "Oh, come in." We went in. Oh, twice blessed! ye who dwell in Belgravia, Kensington, or even Whitechapel, do ye realise what it is to sit once more under a roof through which the rain does not trickle in an icy flood down your backbone? That is how we felt when we sat on the kitchen chairs and empty provision-cases around the deal tables, under a roof through which the rain never came except in certain places which were easily avoided.

The house was divided by partitions of dried mud into three rooms. One was Mr Sampson's



bedroom and office ; the centre in which we sat was the dining-room ; that on the right Mr Sampson gave up to Mrs Foot, the nurse, and children.

For sleeping accommodation the male passengers revelled in the unaccustomed luxury of the dining-table, cleverly fashioned from empty cases, and two cane-chairs. To appreciate the delights we experienced on this eventful day I must request my gentle reader to sleep out on a doorstep on a rainy night and think of the dry cosy bed at home. It will not be necessary to remain long enough to catch a cold, as the sensation will be appreciated with most surprising spontaneity probably long before the doorstep is reached.

We had only paid £12 each for our passage and 6s. per cubic foot for baggage, which, even when our scrupulous captain measured a bunch of bananas we brought on board at the same rate, seemed too insignificant to be possible, when we took into consideration the lavish munificence displayed in our accommodation during the voyage.

## CHAPTER II.

## MAZARO TO MORAMBALA.

A HUNTING EPISODE—CHRISTMAS-DAY IN AFRICA—REMINISCENCES  
OF OTHER CHRISTMAS-DAYS—NEAR MOZAMBIQUE—A CHRIST-  
MAS DINNER-PARTY IN THE DELTA—A FALSE START IN THE  
LADY NYASSA—A SNAKE ADVENTURE AT SHUPANGA—ARRIVAL  
AT MORAMBALA.

DURING the next few days our host and the captain were busily employed in plugging up the holes in the bottom of the steamer, and we having little else to do than to kick our heels on the packing-cases in the dining-room, determined on making up a hunting-party, consisting of Mr G., Winton, and myself. The country around was a vast plain, dotted here and there with clumps of palm-trees, and overgrown with cane-grass some eight feet in height.

Inquiring of Mr Sampson, we were informed that in the neighbourhood were great numbers of

antelope, besides leopards and an occasional lion. We were naturally anxious to make some little addition to our scanty larder. It had been raining over night, and the ground was wet and sodden. Nothing daunted, however, we woke up before sunrise on the following morning. Armed with Martini rifles, a belt of cartridges, and a bag containing a cold fowl with which to sustain us during the expedition, we plunged into the jungle of cane-grass. The last night's rain clung to every stalk. We traversed a seemingly endless shower-bath. Mr G., who was in front, after an hour's weary tramp through the grass, proposed that some one else should take his place. Winton volunteered, and floundered for some time, when he proposed that I should take my turn also.

Wondering at this modesty on the part of my companions, I took the lead, and soon found out the reason for which they had relinquished the foremost position. At every step my feet were caught by the trailing reeds, and I found the principal duty was to tramp down with considerable difficulty and exertion a highway for those following.

After a wearied tramp of one or two hours we had lost all knowledge of our position. The sun

had got well up in the sky, and had scorched up every drop of moisture on the reeds and ourselves, beating down on our heads with a fury second only to the furnace of the Lady Nyassa. Up to this time we had seen no trace of game of any kind. The sun showed that it was past noon, and we held a council to know which was the direction back home. We were in fact lost, and lost in the midst of the African jungle. It was a novel experience, but not a pleasant one. There was every prospect of this being an African unrevised edition of the painful history of the 'Babes in the Wood.'

As we were in this desponding mood something moved in the immediate vicinity, and, like true huntsmen, we were on the alert. Winton happening, from an irresistible impulse, to sneeze, had evidently alarmed some wild animal in our proximity. A crushing sound was heard. We grasped our rifles with a determination to sell our lives as dearly as possible. We proposed that some one should go forward. Winton said he was not quite sure of his cartridge, whereupon Mr G. most obligingly offered him his own rifle. I myself kept as much as possible in the background.

Waiting for several minutes, and no other sound coming from the reeds, we decided to approach with the utmost caution, all together. The noise we made in doing this evidently startled the ferocious beast in front of us; however, this did not affect us in the slightest degree, beyond a tremulous feeling, which unfortunately caused Winton's gun to go off prematurely. Startled by the unexpectedness of this accident, and enveloped in a cloud of smoke, it was with a considerable degree of trepidation that we heard a furious scurrying and tearing of the wild animal hidden close by. Winton occupied a sitting posture, consequent on the sudden recoil of his rifle, and seeing his unprotected position, we determined at all hazards to stand by him, though discretion and prudence would have warranted us in retiring from so grave and unknown a peril. Had the beast, whom we were convinced was of the most ferocious species, intended leaping upon us, our position would have placed us entirely at its mercy. Finding, however, to our great relief, that it was travelling in an opposite direction, and consequently running away, we conjectured that there was no immediate necessity for us to do so. We followed up

the track of the flying animal with enthusiastic zeal. For fifty yards we continued our headlong pursuit, when to our astonishment we found ourselves in the open space in front of the station, and an old black goat tearing frantically towards the bank, to the open-mouthed amazement of the ducks and fowls, who obviously considered the conduct of the goat most frivolous and indecorous for one so advanced in years. The feeling of relief that we experienced in finding that every one was indoors having afternoon tea was sufficient reward for the fatigue and perils of the day; and we could enter, knowing that we had done our best, and had shared merely one of the common vicissitudes of the hunter.

The next day was Christmas-day, and Mrs Foot and the nurse were busy preparing puddings and pies. The thermometer in the shade marked 105°, and the time between sunrise and sunset was occupied in searching for the coolest spot, where we reclined on cane mats and watched the smoke indolently curling from our pipes. There is little or nothing to mark the Christmas-day in Africa except that it is very often one of the hottest in the year. It is mostly celebrated by the slaughter of a duck, and tinned plum-pudding.

One Christmas I spent in the vicinity of Mozambique. I landed in the morning on the shores of Kisima-Julu harbour, and with a few natives carrying my camp gear, struck north for Fernão-Veloso Bay over an unexplored tract of country. For the first three or four miles the country was cleared by the natives. The trees were smouldering on the ground in every direction, and the sun beat down overhead as only it does on Christmas-day. The air was tremulous with a white-heat vapour. Earth and sky were a huge furnace. The heat around was so fierce and penetrating that even the negroes showed signs of being affected by it, and I myself soon felt the symptoms of threatened sunstroke. Sitting down on a burning log, the little water we were carrying with us was poured on my head, and revived me sufficiently to be able to proceed in a half-conscious state. Another mile brought us into the forest, where the green vegetation alleviated somewhat the scorching atmosphere. Travelling on in a dazed way until near sundown, we arrived at a pool of muddy water, around which were innumerable footprints of animals, from the tiny gazelle to the elephantine spoor of the rhinoceros. We pitched our camp in a glade five

hundred yards from this pool, and our Christmas dinner was being prepared. It consisted of roast venison we had shot the day previous, and a small plum-pudding just extracted from a tin. At this moment a shrill whistling noise was heard, and in an indescribably short space of time all the occupants of our camp, including myself, could have been seen perched on the boughs of the neighbouring trees. The cause of this sudden reversion to the habits of bird-life was sufficiently explained by what was going on below in the camp, from which issued such whistling and hissing as would have done credit to a metropolitan railway terminus. Stamping on our fires, our dinner, and tent with blind rage and gratuitous ferocity, were two huge rhinoceroses, who continued their work of vicious destruction till they had flattened out everything in camp. Unfortunately, our guns were down below, and we had to remain unwilling though interested spectators until the brutes had finished their performance and retired.

Some years later I was exploring the Delta, and happening to drop on a settlement on Christmas-day, where were a number of Europeans, I was invited to a feast given by the hospitable



agent of the Dutch house, Mynbeer van Heez, at Inhamissengo. There was a long table in the centre room of the house, in which there was a door at both ends to allow a draught to pass through.

The dinner was ready at seven o'clock, when the guests sat down. The soup, however, had hardly appeared before it was found impossible for the thickest-skinned to endure the maddening attacks of a dense cloud of mosquitoes that filled the room. It was therefore decided that we should adjourn to the open, until means had been taken to exterminate these pests. A fire of damp grass was made at the windward door, so that the smoke blew into the room and presented a very real imitation of a London fog, effectually asphyxiating the mosquitoes. The guests, who were busy trotting up and down outside, each with his handkerchief flicking off the torturers from his face and nether limbs, were apprised that the room was now habitable, and after careful groping along the chairs, we sat down to our cooled soup, which had acquired a pronounced flavour of smoked grass.

The semi-suffocation, however, was a decided improvement on our former experience, though

the faces around the table would have presented to a stranger a sad and compassion-moving sight, had he seen the silent tears trickling down our cheeks from the acrid nature of the smoke. The joint appeared after a little delay, and in spite of the trifling inconveniences, we were rapidly settling down to enjoy a convivial evening. At this moment strange sounds came from the direction of the kitchen, and a voice that spoke of intense alarm was heard through the smoke exclaiming that a native cur had gone mad and was generally running *amok*. Mynheer van Heez sprang up, ran into his bedroom, and seized his fowling-piece. He had hardly gone when, to our consternation, an ominous snarling was heard coming from the darkness under the table. A sudden and overpowering instinct of self-preservation impelled the guests to remove their legs from the vicinity of the floor, and every place of vantage was hastily appropriated. The plates, joint, and guests quickly changed places. At this moment our host entered the room, with his gun at full cock, to find the majority of his guests huddled in the centre of the table, and the mad cur roaming at large amongst the shattered crockery. A terrific report and a cloud of sulphurous

smoke was followed by a dying yelp. A servant was called and the defunct delinquent carried out by the tip of his tail. The *débris* of the feast was carefully collected, and the joint, mangled past recognition, was relegated to the kitchen. We had still the pudding, which was handed round on banana-leaves, the stock of crockery in the settlement having been sacrificed in the late disaster.<sup>1</sup>

The next two days were employed in rigging up a serviceable tent over the dining and sleeping saloon, and placing a fresh roof on the ladies' saloon aft. On December 28 the furnace was aglow. The paddles, like long-stabled and over-fed steeds, were fretting for our departure. Their eagerness and vitality, indeed, were so ungovernable, that when the engineer let loose the bridle by touching the lever, they whirled themselves round with such frightful and insane velocity that, to save the whole concern from being shattered to pieces, the engine was immediately stopped. Such extraordinary conduct on the

<sup>1</sup> It is the custom, when giving a dinner to a number of people, that the guests resident in the neighbourhood should make a loan of their crockery and cutlery, as well as bring their servants to wait on them.

part of the engine, which had hitherto conducted itself with the most exemplary staidness, and had always evinced a phlegmatic and easy-going disposition, naturally filled passengers and crew with the greatest consternation. The captain made a minute survey of the pipes and pistons, carefully wiping off the surplus oil on the bearings, thinking, perhaps, they had been lubricated too freely. The lever was slightly turned again, and all anxiously awaited the result; but the paddles obviously gathering up themselves afresh for another whirr, the lever was promptly replaced, fortunately in time to prevent a fresh outburst of the fiendish and frivolous proclivity so unaccountably acquired by the engine. Having inspected everything on board, from the tiller in the stern to the hen-coop in the bows, that could possibly give an explanation for this extraordinary state of affairs, it suddenly occurred to the passengers to look overboard, when it was discovered that the steamer was aground and the paddles a foot out of the water. This unfortunate *contretemps* necessitated the disembarkation of the passengers and baggage. We trooped back to the station and put up for the

night. Meanwhile a number of natives were obtained, and with considerable difficulty the *Lady Nyassa* was pushed off into deeper water.

The next morning at sunrise we re-embarked, and the captain and passengers having taken the most stringent precautions by looking over-board to be certain that the paddles were in the water, we proceeded up-stream. After steaming for three hours we found that the supply of fuel was exhausted, and the captain determined to put in near Shupanga, on the right bank, about five miles above Mazaro. All hands went on shore to cut wood for the furnace. The country in this part was well wooded, little traversed, and teeming with game. While the stokers were collecting fuel, Mr G., Winton, and myself started off with rifles on our shoulders to bring back something for dinner. For twenty yards from the steamer we traversed a boggy, evil-smelling thicket of coarse grass. From this we ascended the bank, and found ourselves in a typical African forest. Around were flat-topped mimosa, and here and there scrubs of thorns. This was practically the first time I had been in the true African forest. I had heard so many stories of the

dangers from wild animals and poisonous snakes, that it was with considerable trepidation I ventured to put one foot down where the other had not been, thinking that every twig and every blade of grass was a puff-adder or cobra of the most venomous and malignant species. After walking several yards without experiencing any of the frightful and fatal results with which my mind was full, this nervous feeling gradually diminished. Around some of the gigantic baobab were entwined huge sinuous tendrils. On the soft earth beneath were numberless footprints. One quite recent, Mr G. asserted, was that of a wild boar; but Winton and myself, having acquired considerable experience in hunting wild animals in Africa from our last expedition, expressed grave suspicions that if we followed up this wild boar, it would most certainly turn out to be the property of a neighbouring farmyard. It was thereupon decided that we should not follow it any farther.

Pursuing our course for several miles, bending under thorn thickets, crawling through the dense underwood, we reached an open glade, at the extremity of which, hanging on by its tail to

the lowermost branch of a mimosa-tree, we espied a gigantic cobra, some twenty feet in length, which was evidently intent on seizing a small bird sitting unconsciously on a bush a few feet from its head below. We were hidden by the undergrowth, and although Mr G., sitting on a low branch, broke it with a sharp crack that resounded through the forest and was precipitated amid the brushwood out of sight, the venomous reptile was fortunately undisturbed. Placing our rifles on our knees in an attitude to ensure the greatest accuracy of aim, it was arranged that we should fire on a given signal from Mr G. We were all to aim at the head. Putting up the sights to a hundred yards, which Mr G. said was the correct distance, we waited anxiously for the signal. We fired. Rising to our feet, we saw the monstrous reptile hanging limp and dead. Waiting for a moment or two to see if there remained any life before approaching, we cautiously reloaded our rifles and crossed the glade, our eyes fixed on the huge corpse. As we approached, and were able to see more clearly, a grave doubt filled our minds, which we had not the hardihood to express. We reached the cobra; Winton put his hand on it and pulled

down a long dead tendril hanging from the bough! A few feathers alongside on the bush gave evidence of the sad end of the little bird. Mr G. and Winton simply said "Aha!" and without any further observation, except that the sun was going down and it was almost time to be getting back to the steamer for dinner, we reshouldered our rifles and disappeared over the glade, reaching the vessel as the last of the stokers were concluding their day's work.

Early next morning we left in the mist, and threaded our way through numerous small islands covered with coarse grass. The sun rose up behind a line of thickly wooded hills, and lit up the precipitous sides of Morambala Mountain in front. The country presented an entirely different aspect. Hitherto were only low-lying monotonous banks. In a few hours we were under the Shimwara hills, and had left the Zambesi for the narrow channel of the Shiré river. The dark-green vegetation, clothing these hills from summit to base, gave a delightful air of coolness and freshness to the scene. A few bends and we were in sight of Chigumbo, a wooding-station of the African Lakes Company, where we took in a load of fuel.



## CHAPTER III.

## IN THE MORAMBALA MARSH.

THE MORAMBALA MARSH—THE HIPPO IN CENTRAL AFRICA—ITS USELESSNESS AND DANGER—ITS GRADUAL EXTINCTION—METHODS EMPLOYED IN HUNTING IT—A HIPPO-HUNT AT MOZAMBIQUE—THE CROCODILE AS A SCAVENGER—FATALITY CAUSED BY CROCODILES—CROCODILE INCIDENTS.

STEAMING up the narrow channel of the Shiré river, we were able to appreciate the immensity and grandeur of the body of water we had just left in the main stream of the Zambesi. Here the banks were in places scarcely more than five hundred yards across, while on the Zambesi the width often exceeded two or three miles, the banks being discernible by a fringe of palms on the horizon.

We had now to pass through the first of the two great swamps on the Shiré. Leaving the granite pile of Morambala astern, we winded

in a serpentine course through a wide sea of reeds and mud. As far as the eye could reach were the waving tops of coarse grass and canes, the home of the hippo, crocodile, and innumerable varieties of birds. Flocks of geese and duck winged their way overhead. Herons, flamingoes, and storks, disturbed by our approach at every turn, sprang up from the reeds with a startled cry, to settle again a hundred yards away in the swamp. The morass was bounded to the north-east and west by blue mountain-peaks,—those to the west being the out-jutting spur of the great interior African plateau. The hills to the east formed a ridge beginning at Morambala and increasing in altitude until they joined the Shiré highlands.

On leaving Chigumbo our decks were piled up with newly-cut wood, amongst which a naturalist would have found sufficient specimens of everything that crawls, creeps, and stings to keep him in an elysium for the rest of the voyage. We, however, being less learned or enthusiastic in the cause of science, experienced considerable interest in searching our blankets and clothing for creatures to whom nature had, from our low point of view, been far too lavish

in the supply of legs and venom-sacs. It was not unusual during the night for one or more of us to be sitting up on the deck awakened by a crawly sensation, with a look of intense anxiety as we slowly and carefully turned up our underclothing, expecting each fold to disclose some fresh million-legged horror.

We passed numberless schools of hippos—colloquial and short for hippopotami—and the omnipresent crocodile. Now we are among them, it is a good opportunity to study their particular status in Africa. In considering the position of the hippo in Central Africa, we ought first to see what its value or usefulness is when alive, and also what position it holds with regard to the opening up of these countries to civilisation. Its claims for utility may be summarily dismissed, for it has none. It is not a scavenger, and alive is of no value except to send home to a zoological society. When dead, its teeth form a valuable commercial product, and its hide is manufactured into kourbaj, employed for the correction of local evildoers. Its flesh is excellent eating, not unlike beef. Its attitude to industry and commerce is an unqualified antagonism. Scarcely a month goes

past without some disaster to boats and canoes invading their haunts, and the list of fatal accidents from their attacks reaches a considerable total per annum. They are, however, becoming gradually diminished in numbers, and where a few years ago one could scarcely pass ten miles on any of these water-ways without encountering them, they are only now to be found in the Lower Zambesi and Shiré in well-defined areas, where they have congregated for mutual protection from the attacks of hunters.

On the upper waters of these rivers, however, they still exist in vast numbers. On the Lower Zambesi, as far as the Acababassa Falls, for three hundred miles there are under a hundred head of these brutes; while on the Shiré river, in the great elephant-morass, above the Ruo, there are probably from three hundred to five hundred, though this number is appreciably lessened every year, and it is highly probable in another five years the hippo will be a *rara avis* on these lower rivers.

They are entirely herbivorous, going on shore at night for their food. They are very partial to native gardens, where they commit great havoc and wanton destruction.

Traps are often placed in the tracks used by them up the river-banks. A heavy log is suspended by a grass rope to the branch of a tree immediately over their tracks. In the lower extremity of this log is an iron spike. It is released by the passage of the hippo underneath, and the formidable instrument, embedded in the brute's neck, often causes instantaneous death. These traps are mostly used for the protection of gardens and plantations.

Hunting-parties are formed, consisting of fifty or more natives, and often twenty or thirty canoes. A weapon similar to that of a whaling-harpoon, but roughly made, is adroitly launched at these animals in the water. The barbed iron point remains embedded in the flesh and the heavy wooden handles float off in the water, connected with the barb by a strong rope, which uncoils and leaves the pole some twenty feet behind. After ten or more of these harpoons with their lines have been buried in an animal, the hunters swim behind, collect the poles, and the lines are twisted round into a single strong rope. The hunters succeed by this means in pulling the animal by sheer force to the bank, where it is despatched with

spears. A considerable number are killed in this manner.

The Europeans also materially aid in their extinction with the rifle. I have been present at many of these hunting-parties, both native and European. While writing this narrative, I have before me a fine head which I shot near Mozambique. Some ten miles from the capital is a small river called the Sinyudi. Cruising about on the east coast, as was my practice for several years, I entered this little-known river, and saw two fine hippos. I returned to Mozambique, and telling several of the residents of my discovery, we made up a hunting-party for the river. The party consisted of Captain B. and his wife, a member of the Telegraph Company, a German merchant, and an Irish visitor to the town. Three hours' sail over the coral banks in our boats brought us into the river Sinyudi. We worked our way up the narrow channel, and camped five miles from the mouth. The river at this point was simply an estuary, since at low water the sea entirely left the soft muddy bed, while here and there were deep pools remaining from the ebb tide. The whole country from the banks was covered by dense jungle and brush-

wood, inhabited by lions, leopards, and buffaloes, with not a single trace of man. On our arrival the sun had already disappeared behind the rising ground to our left. The darkness was rapidly blotting out the surrounding wilderness, so that the short twilight gave us little time to clear a space out of the bush for our camp, and our tent was not pitched until the stars shone out overhead.

Captain B., a small, rotund, and convivial individual, who had fallen from aloft during one of his voyages and seriously altered the shape of his limbs, decided to sleep in his boat with his wife. As from the depths of the bush the cries of jackals, hyenas, and a distant echo of a leonine roar had been heard, considerable anxiety was shown as to who should sleep near the open doorway of the tent. A pile of thorns was placed outside, and lots were cast to decide our positions for the night. At midnight a supplicatory voice was heard coming from the darkness. Most of those in camp, never having been in the bush before, were naturally wide awake. A candle was hastily lit. The rays fell on two white apparitions. A more minute search disclosed the corpulent captain and the pallid face of his wife

peering over his shoulders, in their night-dresses. He explained that their boat was left aground by the tide, and in the midst of their slumbers a gigantic mouth appeared over their bed with out-opened jaws. The captain, awakened by his alarmed spouse, looked out on the water-forsaken waste, to find to his consternation three huge forms patrolling round the grounded and isolated boat, evidently filled with an obtrusive curiosity of the worthy couple. This night-horror proved too real for the captain and his lady, and they promptly decided that to wade through the mud on shore and seek the protection of our camp, braving Madame Grundy's worst, would be far preferable to spending the rest of the night unprotected and alone. One of the most adventurous brought a sail from the stranded boat, and we fixed up a temporary tent for them, from which in the early morning they returned privately to the boat and reclothed themselves in their everyday garb.

At sunrise we started off with the flood-tide up the river to one of the pools. The male members of the party packed in a small crank dug-out. Mrs B. remained in camp with a number of natives. One of the pools showed



signs of its having been inhabited recently by a hippo, there being a number of footprints on the soft muddy bank. We tied the canoe to an overhanging bough at the side, and each of the occupants held his rifle in readiness, pointing at the water. We waited the appearance of the hippo's head above the smooth surface. After remaining in this expectant attitude for some time, our cramped position caused considerable inconvenience, and we had almost given up hopes of getting a shot. Suddenly a sharp ripple appeared on the water not a foot from our canoe. The expectancy of seeing the brute so dangerously close caused a momentary forgetfulness of the unstable nature of the craft, and the sudden movement of the occupants overturned the dug-out, precipitating them into the pool, discovering *en route* that the ripple was caused merely by the legs of a passing gnat. The discovery, however, was too late. Convulsive struggles ensued under the water, from which the hunters emerged damp and muddy, a look of the most intense astonishment on their faces as they made for the shore. Arriving at the bank a few seconds afterwards, we counted heads, and discovered to our dismay that the little captain was not to be seen. The

pool by this time had again become placid, and except for the overturned dug-out, there were no signs of the late catastrophe and present tragedy. Suddenly two ominous black objects appeared on the surface, which from their shape and agitation we had grave reasons to suspect were the jaws of a crocodile, and from their convulsive movements were evidently engaged in swallowing the remnants of our unfortunate captain. The German was about to fire when one of us fortunately discovered that they were the captain's boots, their owner evidently being in a state of considerable anxiety beneath the surface. Jumping into the water, we succeeded in hauling out the boots from their unpleasant predicament, and seated the captain right side upwards on the beach, his hair coated in slime, which trickled down his ashy face in grimy streams. After sundry spasmodic gasps he showed signs of recovering, and we despatched him back to camp to be washed down and comforted by his spouse. The Irishman and myself proceeded to the next pool, and from the bank saw a large hippo's head protruding from the water. Seeing our approach, it immediately sank. We sat down on the edge

and awaited its reappearance to breathe. As soon as a small black object, the extreme tip of its nose, rose cautiously above the water, it was saluted by two rifle-shots. Not knowing in which part of the pool it would next be seen, and the mark it gave us being so small, it was some time before we succeeded in putting a shot into it. A Martini bullet entered its eye, and brought it on to the bank ten yards from us. The Irishman with a double-barrelled rifle, unaccustomed to being at such close quarters with a wounded brute of these dimensions, fired right and left, one shot striking the ground five yards in front of us, the other breaking off the topmost bough of a high tree behind. A shot from a twelve-bore rifle, however, striking it on the jaw, smashed away both sides of its head, and it fell with a thud stone-dead.

With regard to the utility of the crocodile there are diverse opinions. It is certainly a scavenger, though when we take into consideration the rapid currents which most of these rivers have, and their scouring qualities, the importance of his business dwindles down so much as to make it inconsiderable, and it is my own opinion

that the interests of every one would be advanced by his extermination. It is, however, perhaps hopeless to expect that the day will ever arrive when there will be none of these reptiles haunting the Central African water-ways. The crocodile appears to breed on the same illimitable scale as the mosquito. In some places one sees thousands of these brutes on a mud-bank, most of them scarcely two inches in length, evidently just hatched. A week does not pass but in some river-village wails and lamentations are heard for a fresh victim to their insatiable appetite. I would estimate that at least a hundred human lives are sacrificed per annum on the lower waters of these two rivers, devoured by these monsters. So dangerous is it in certain parts to approach the river-edge, that water for domestic purposes is obtained from the top of the banks by means of a cup attached to a bamboo pole twenty or thirty feet in length, and in spite of these precautions the death-roll is a most ghastly one.

The primitive dug-outs used by the natives for travelling on the rivers are in many cases merely death-traps. Paddling along barely two inches

above the surface of the river, the crocodile seizes the hand of the native and drags him down to the bottom.

When I was at Sumbo on the Chinde, my host, Senhor Caezar d'Andrade, engaged a canoe-man to take some produce down the river in his own craft. The native took with him two of his wives, who occupied the centre of the canoe. On the way these unfortunate women were seized and devoured by crocodiles. Having accomplished his mission, the native returned to Senhor d'Andrade and laid a claim to the extent of ten shillings per wife for their demise, an incident which my host told me was of frequent occurrence.

On one occasion I sent down some letters by a Hindoo merchant, and a few weeks later heard that both my letters and postman had been devoured by crocodiles. At another time I was strolling along the bank, and hearing cries, arrived at the water's edge in time to seize hold of a young boy whose leg was held by one of these brutes and torn from him, he just escaping with his life by my timely arrival. I could enumerate very many other instances of a similar

nature, when not only natives but Europeans have lost life or limb from these voracious reptiles, but the enumeration of them is so full of ghastly and horrible details that they are best left to the reader's imagination.

## CHAPTER IV.

## FROM MORAMBALA TO BLANTYRE.

NOTICE OF BOUNDARY OF BRITISH PROTECTORATE—CHIROMO—  
INCIDENTS IN ITS LATER HISTORY—A TREE CEMETERY—BISHOP  
MACKENZIE'S GRAVE—BURIAL CUSTOMS—YAO CHIEF'S GRAVE  
—ANOTHER GRAVE—A SWAHILI'S GRAVE—GREAT ELEPHANT  
MARSH — ARRIVAL AT KATUNGA — LOADING PORTERS FOR  
ACROSS COUNTRY—MBAMI—AN ATTACK BY MAVITI—ARRIVAL  
AT BLANTYRE.

AT the end of the Morambala marsh we arrived at a spot which now forms the southern extremity of the British Protectorate. To-day a board is to be seen here on the right bank of the river to inform passers-by that beyond is British property, and to warn off unlawful trespassers, more particularly our neighbours the Portuguese, for whose special admonition it was erected. This is indeed the first instance of the establishment of an intimation, apparently so necessary

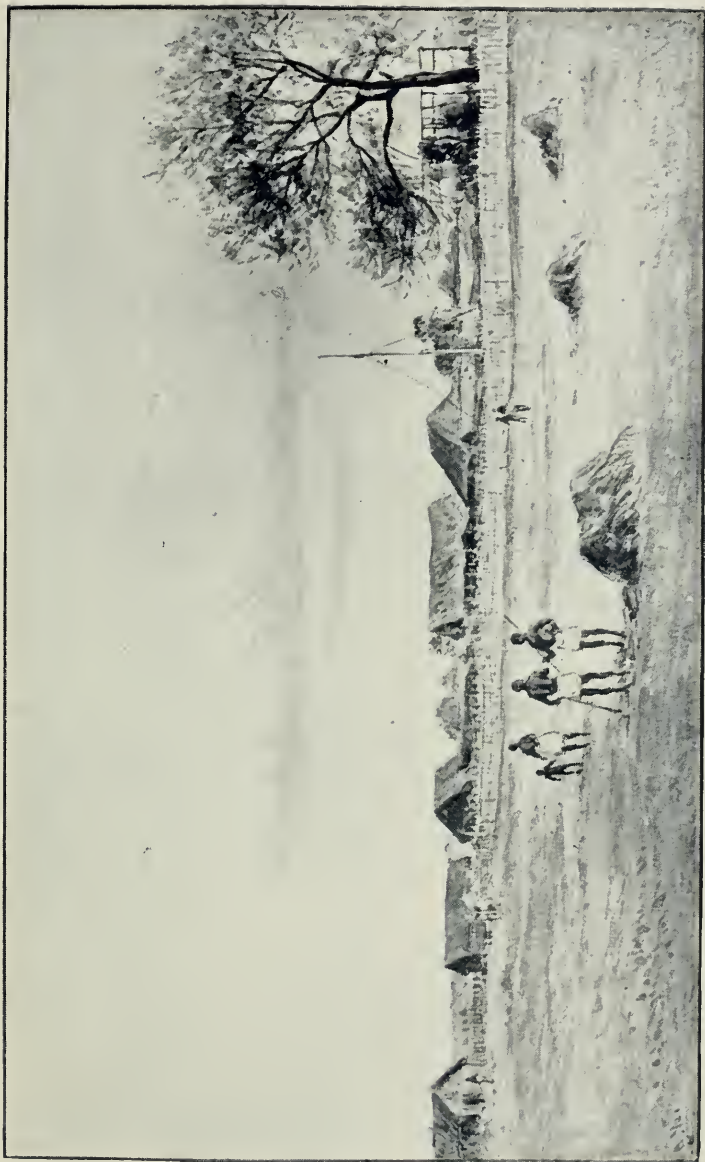
to civilisation, that "trespassers will be prosecuted."

The trees and luxuriant vegetation now covering the river valley, and rising in well-wooded slopes up the face of the plateau, afforded a pleasant change to the dismal and monotonous swamp we had left. Another day's steam brought us to Chiromo, a large native town then under the rule of Chipitula, one of Dr Livingstone's *protégés*. This town was built on the north bank of the Ruo, on the narrow neck of land at its confluence with the Shiré. Since our first visit it has passed through many and eventful phases of history. The medley of native huts we then saw have been swept away and removed some distance up the Ruo.

In 1888 this place was the scene of the historical battle of Chiromo, which ended in the retirement of the Portuguese troops under Major Serpa Pinto and the declaration of the British Protectorate of the Shiré highlands, an event that marked the official birth of this newest offspring of our great colonial empire.

On a small island to the south of the confluence is the site of Bishop Mackenzie's grave, the pioneer of the Universities' Mission to this part





CHIROMO, SHIRÉ RIVER.



of Africa in 1859. Wishing to visit it, in conformity with the pious custom of travellers at that time, who made it their duty to clear it from the encroachments of the bush, we obtained the services of a guide and passed over the Ruo in a large canoe. Our landing collected a great crowd of women and children, who assembled at a safe distance to gaze on us, and as we passed through the village, ran, shrieking and crying, behind the huts, satisfying their curiosity by peering at us from their place of vantage. Nowadays this feeling of curiosity and fear has altogether vanished, and the increased familiarity with Europeans has effectually brought about the proverbial result, which has often been shown in an unpleasant way, and is only checked by the presence of two British gunboats now anchored in mid-stream. Arriving on the island, we walked for some distance over a maize plantation under the scorching rays of the mid-day sun. We then plunged into a thick jungle, through which we forced our way. The rank vegetation rose three feet above our heads, cutting like knife-blades—even our thick leather boots did not escape. Suddenly we found ourselves floundering above our knees in a foul-

smelling pond, from which we emerged in the midst of a thicket of thorny brambles, receiving from them many ugly tears, both in flesh and clothes, in spite of the negro in front hacking a passage with a sharp chopper. We passed the thorns and reached open ground, surrounded by large trees. Our guide was here evidently at a loss, and we searched for some time amongst the undergrowth for the Bishop's grave. Under the overhanging branches of one of the trees we came across a native tomb. We crept under the thick foliage, and stood shut out from the glare of the sun in a large arboreal chamber, whose roof and walls were formed of impenetrable masses of branches and leaves. The sudden change from the bright light outside to the intense gloom within required some seconds for our eyes to be able to discern the sepulchral surroundings. At the base of the trunk, in the centre of this house of the dead, were heaps of stones marking graves. At the head of each was a round earthen pot, at one time filled with food, long ago carried off by the ants. Above our heads, suspended in strings of matting to the branches, were dozens of bodies, tier above tier, until they were lost high up in the gloom.

These, we were told, were the remains of those who had died by evil influences, such as measles, hooping-cough, and other strange and unaccountable diseases. Around these hammocks great bloated spiders had woven a shroud of webs, and were evidently, from their robust condition, on the most intimate terms with the dead inmates. A sickly and oppressive odour exuded from the decaying bodies, and was too overpowering for us to remain for more than a few minutes in this charnel-house. We now almost despaired of seeing Bishop Mackenzie's grave, as it was getting time for us to get back ; but, retracing our steps, we found the little iron cross which marked its site. It had fallen down in the grass, and a fair-sized tree, growing out of the grave, showed that it had not been visited for some time past. We cleared away all the undergrowth and returned to the steamer.

Now we are in this grave mood, it may not be out of place to describe in a general way other native burial customs, as they give a very fair idea of the popular beliefs of what is coming afterwards.

A few months later I again visited our friend Chipitula, the chief of Chiromo ; but this time

he was under ground, and I had an opportunity, under circumstances described in another chapter, of seeing the method employed in the interment of a chief. His tomb was his palace, a huge wooden building. At the extremities of the immense grass roof were two white flags. The walls were surrounded by folds of white cloth, with which the building was enshrouded. The pathos of the scene was heightened by the words appearing at the end of each piece of cloth, stamped in blue, "Warranted superfine American sheeting"! The door was closed, and the whole place left to fall away from the decay of age. Chipitula, the chief, was interred in a deep hole dug in the centre of the house, his body being placed in a niche in one of the sides. This niche was most carefully sealed, and every possible artifice employed to hide its locality. The position of these niches is always different, so that the evil spirit, who, after the manner of his relative so well known to the Western world, prowls ghoul-like around men's graves, according to native ideas, in search of a late dinner, will not be able to find the place where his *recherche* meal is hidden until the night has got so advanced that he has been obliged to give up hope

of a dinner, and has to search for a breakfast elsewhere. A good gravedigger is always in great requisition with the natives, and the disappointed spirit is evidently the local modification of the more civilised Tantalus. On the floor of the house are several large pots containing an assortment of delicacies for the departed's refec-tion. Around the walls are placed his personal property, a method which obviates the necessity of a will, and the many wranglings and heart-burnings so often seen amongst the relatives of those that have gone before in other parts of the world.

Should any of the natives round about, consequent on an indiscreet appetite before retiring, conjure up in his midnight dreams the form of the defunct, it is believed that the deceased gentleman considers himself slighted, or having eaten everything put on the grave, is naturally hungry, his reappearance being accepted as a mild remonstrance on the forgetfulness of his old friends. The next day his visit is announced publicly, and the housewives busy themselves in preparing their culinary *chefs-d'œuvre*, which are carried to and placed over the grave with great ceremony.

On a journey of exploration some time after from Blantyre to Quillimane, near Ndima—the Hill of Darkness—I passed the grave of a Yao chief. For many yards around the vegetation had been reverently cleared by passers-by. He was placed in a sitting posture in the grave, now fallen in by age, so that he might look on the road in front. He had spent a weary and wandering life traversing this road at the head of caravans, and by his own desire his worn-out body was set in an easy attitude amid the scenes of his life's work, so that his spirit, still interested in his late profession, might comfortably watch future generations enduring the same worries and vexations that he had himself passed through. It has occurred to me that this poor heathen had more than a glimpse of one of the beatitudes in store for ourselves.

On the same journey, under a clump of banana-trees in front of our tent, was the newly made grave of the late chief. On a pole fixed in the centre waved a few yards of brilliantly coloured handkerchiefs, for which he, like other natives, had a great predilection, not necessarily from a chronic catarrh, since these useful pieces



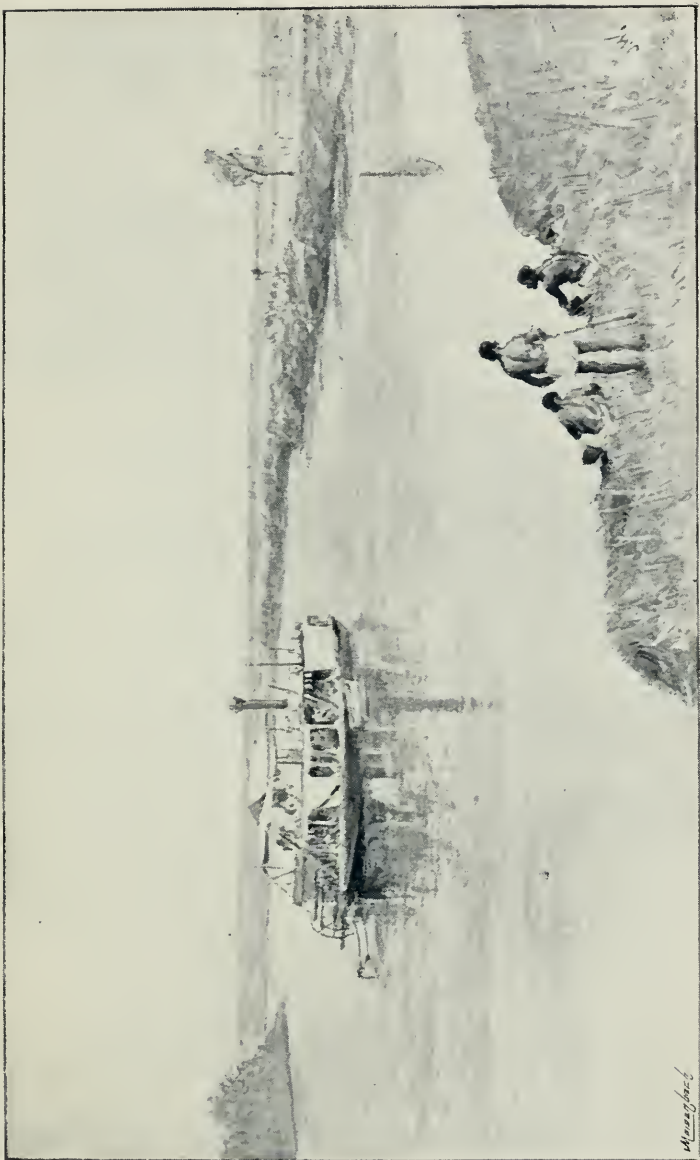
of linen came in very handy for the rising generation. One handkerchief carefully cut up, and two or three pieces of string to tie them round the waist, was sufficient clothing for a large family, and was necessarily equivalent to an unlimited credit with a tailor or dressmaker. Inside the sloping roof of dried grass was a small oblong enclosure surrounded by a miniature mud-wall a foot high. At the head stood a clay pedestal, on which were some cigars, a gourd containing *moa* (beer), and in the centre two heaps of flour, or *ufa*, made from maize. A few yards farther off, a burnt patch of ground marked the former site of the chief's house, all that remained being the mud-raised bedstead, which was religiously preserved.

During an afternoon on our route we passed the newly made grave of an Arab trader. It was sheltered from the rain and sun by a small hut, open on one side for passers-by to gaze in. A cup was placed at the head. A strong palisade protected it from the defilement of wild beasts. Near at hand was a brush, so that pious travellers of a domestic turn of mind could sweep away the decaying leaves blown on the lonely mound—a simple but beautiful

way of showing their respect for the resting-place of an unknown brother.

An hour's steam from Chiromo brought us into the great elephant-swamp. As far as the eye could see, to the base of the highlands, stretched out a vast plain, covered with low sedge-grass and reeds. Here and there, in the distance, were clumps of wild palms. Great ant-heaps stood up in every direction among cane-thickets. From the paddle-box we could see innumerable herds of animals—gazelle, antelope, buffaloes, and elephant. The two latter often came down to the very edge of the river, and, disturbed by our approach, stood for a moment to gaze at us, shook their heads, and galloped with tails erect out of sight across the plain. There is still a vast number of game remaining in this marsh and in the whole of the Shiré valley, though the number of elephants has greatly diminished during the last ten years. This is, however, still one of the finest hunting-grounds in the world, and well worthy of a visit from European sportsmen.

The Shiré highlands were gradually nearing the river on our right hand. The mountain of Milanji, with its precipitous sides, could be seen over a range of wooded hills sixty miles distant.



H.M.S. HERALD, CHIROMO.

*W. H. H. H.*



The peak of Mount Choro rose up on our right near the river, and the next day the marsh was passed, and the destination of our river-voyage, Katunga, reached. At this place we found an African Lakes station of the ordinary pattern.

Our baggage was arranged in the verandah of the station, and messengers sent out to the neighbouring villages to collect porters to take the boxes and effects up to Blantyre, a distance of thirty-five miles. The river valley stretched for four miles to the foot of the highlands. This plain was covered with native gardens and plantations, dotted here and there with villages. A few miles up stream the navigation of the Lower Shiré ceases, and for a distance of thirty miles pours over the Murchison cataracts from the upper waters that drain Lake Nyassa.

On Saturday we managed to obtain forty men from the chief. These men were drawn up in a line in front of the station. At a signal from the agent they dashed into the verandah, and amidst the wildest confusion struggled and fought for the lightest packages, all the heavy ones being left behind. They carried them outside, and their names and a description of the baggage were taken by the agent. After this a porter

bent down to pick up his load, which not weighing more than 56 lb., he could naturally lift with the greatest ease. A pantomimic performance then ensued. Giving himself an appearance of exerting every atom of strength, the load was lifted barely an inch from the ground, accompanied with many grimaces and stertorous breathing, as if it were utterly beyond his power to raise it. Standing up again, he shrugged his shoulders, saying, "*Kulemera*," or, "It is too heavy." The remainder then came up one by one and went through the same actions. At last, with the laboured assistance of an officious friend, who, after considerable by-play, put it on his shoulders, the porter would depart with knees and back bending under him as if his load were crushing him to the earth, amid the approving acclamations of the onlookers. A few yards off he replaced it on the ground and danced about, shouting with laughter, his friends clapping him on the back with many expressions of admiration at the facetious and side-cracking manner he had carried out his part. After two or three hours spent in waiting for the crowd to go through these manœuvres, which naturally considerably tested our patience, we were ready to start. At

the last moment, however, it was found that the porters had not any food, for which they went off to their villages to get their wives to grind flour for their journey, so that it was twelve o'clock before we were on the road. It fell to my lot to go with them, the rest of the party remaining until the next day. My bed, which consisted of a piece of matting and a rug, a tin of preserved coffee-and-milk, and an empty meat-tin for a kettle, were carried by a boy.

For the first four miles the soft ground had been ploughed up by the tracks of elephants, which made travelling a matter of considerable difficulty, as the holes were one or two feet in depth, covered with twitch-grass. We crossed a stream at the foot of the hills, where the porters sat down for a smoke and rest. Pipes were got out and lit by means of their fire-sticks.

The road now led up the steep slopes of the outlying hills, crossing mountain streams, and passing through thickly wooded country. In a forest of bamboo we had considerable difficulty in wending our way over the fallen branches strewn in the path. Continually ascending with a wearisome monotony, a string of porters in

front and behind, trailing like a huge black snake through the brushwood, we arrived at dark at the village of Mbami, three thousand feet above the river. A hut was cleared out for me. I was overcome by the fatigue of the march and the malarial fever, which the high altitude brought out, and flung myself down on the mat to pass my first and perhaps most uncomfortable night in the African bush. The tired porters threw down their burdens into an enclosure, and prepared their evening meal. About midnight I was awakened by a babel of voices and cries coming from the darkness outside. Crawling out to the low doorway, I saw all the camp astir. The natives were rushing about in mad frenzy, with blazing torches of dried grass in their hands, from which they dashed the fire around them, with shrieks of — “*Maviti, Maviti!*” “*Zulus, Zulus!*” It was evidently a night-attack from these savages. Rushing out of the hut, I soon discovered the meaning of this midnight alarm. The ground was covered with a moving mass of red ants, who from their fierceness had obtained the name of *Maviti*. I lost no time in jumping over a circle of fire that had been formed, and soon



copied the example of the natives in picking off desperately the ants that swarmed over me. Each was provided with two powerful jaws, which, embedded in one's flesh, caused most exquisite pain. So tenacious was their hold that in pulling them off they invariably left their heads behind. It was half an hour before we had got rid of these intruders, and were able to go back to our beds.

It is not unusual, when travelling in the bush, to get covered with these insects, from which the torture is so great that it causes the maddened victim to make a hurried rush to the nearest secluded spot, where he flings off his clothes with an expedition and energy impossible under less urgent circumstances. On one occasion I went out with a friend of mine on a hunting expedition. My friend was an enthusiastic sportsman whom no amount of fatigue or disappointment could dishearten. I myself was tired out, while he appeared as fresh as when we left camp in the early morning. We had not sighted a single head of game, although there was plenty of spoor. The sun was getting low, and we made up our minds that after we had gone through the glen a quarter of a mile in

front of us, we would return. Creeping cautiously along, we saw fifty head of koodoo browsing near the burn below us, on the opposite side, not a hundred yards away. The enthusiasm of my friend, who was a born hunter, was raised to the highest pitch, the fatigue of the weary march we had had since sunrise was all forgotten. We tossed who should have first shot. My friend won. He said that he would go to a small bush ten yards in front, which would hide him from the game, who were quite unconscious of our proximity. Cautiously creeping along on hands and knees, keeping his rifle out of the grass, my friend neared the bush, and I waited ready to rise after his shot, to bring down the animals he left. Arriving there, he put his rifle in an open space among the leaves to see the game. I listened expectantly for the shot. To my astonishment, instead of a sharp ping, I heard such an outburst of profane language as even startled me. My friend's rifle dropped, his coat, waistcoat, and other clothing were flung on the grass, over which he danced *in puris naturalibus*, expressing his feelings in a language which only a Briton, knowing the riches of his mother tongue, can employ when in a state of most acute des-

peration. The game on the other side of the glen were naturally interested. The bucks cocked their ears and sniffed, the does left off browsing and watched anxiously their lords, waiting for the signal to dash away. Seeing that matters were critical, unheeding my maniacal friend, who had evidently been overcome by the scorching heat of the day, I singled out a fine buck, and dropped him before he could disappear in the bush, thus getting us something to eat in our famished camp. I was surprised, however, to find my friend did not altogether appreciate my seeming want of sympathy with his own dilemma, even after I had explained to him, as he picked out the last claws, that he had merely got into a bush of *Maviti*.

Early next morning, two hours before sunrise, we left Mbami. The road from this place was well cleared. We could see little of the country farther than a dozen feet ahead, owing to the dense morning mist that enshrouded the whole landscape. At sunrise the mist quickly disappeared, rolling up the precipitous sides of Sochi Mountain. To our left were peaks above peaks, their summits enveloped in the rising mist. Around stretched out a great panorama

of bright - green wooded undulations. The streams at their base were marked by sinuous lines of darker green vegetation. Another hour, during which we crossed several mountain-streams, brought us past Sochi into a large amphitheatre surrounded on all sides by granite hills. In the centre of this we could see the houses of the Blantyre settlement embedded in a mass of vegetation, amongst which bloomed a veritable garden of flowers. Last year, when I visited it again, the whole scene was changed. On the slopes the forests had gone, and in their place were plantations of dark olive-green coffee-trees, and the settlement of grass houses had developed into a town, amongst which charming red-bricked villas showed the dwellings of the principal coffee - planters, and the shambles of the African Lakes Company had developed into warehouses and mansions. The road I had passed over from Katunga is now a magnificent highway, and reflects the highest credit on the pioneer enterprise of the African Lakes Company, under whose auspices it was made. It will, however, be necessary to alter its gradation to meet the increased wants of the community, and it is to be hoped that the new administra-

tion will affect the improvements necessary, so that it may be used for vehicular traffic; and if her Majesty's Commissioner would direct his primary attention to the improvement of road communication, he would do very much to confer a real and lasting boon on the country.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE RETAKING OF THE LADY NYASSA.

BLANTYRE—THE CHURCH OLD AND NEW—LIONS IN THE SETTLEMENT IN THE OLD DAYS—NEWS OF THE TAKING OF THE LADY NYASSA—DEFENCE OF THE COLONY—VOLUNTEERS FOR THE RECAPTURE—HISTORY OF THE MAKOLOLO—JOURNEY TO MBWE—ESCAPE AND RETURN WITH THE STEAMER—RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICES OF VOLUNTEERS BY THE AFRICAN LAKES COMPANY.

IN the early part of 1884, the present flourishing colony of Blantyre in the Shiré highlands had not emerged from its infancy. It was practically unknown to the civilised world, and except for the appointment of a consul, was little else than an outlying mission-station. At that time the community numbered some forty or fifty persons, for the most part scattered over the wilds of Lake Nyassa. Of these only two were planters. The African Lakes Company, a semi-missionary

and trading concern, scarcely numbered a third, the remainder being purely and simply missionaries.

Our consular party was kindly provided by the Scottish Mission of Blantyre with one of their bungalows in the missionary quadrangle. The mission grounds were most tastefully and elegantly laid out under the assiduous care of Mr Duncan, now a successful planter. A road passed down the glen, through an avenue of eucalypti, till it met the rustic bridge spanning the granite-strewn waters of the Mudi, under the dark shade of great fig-trees. Across the bridge a steep incline, lined on either side by coffee-plantations and fruit-orchards, led up to the thorn stockade surrounding the compound of the African Lakes Company, from which the white ventilators of Blantyre could be seen a mile away over the glen.

Every one who visited Blantyre in those days remembers with a feeling almost of affection the charming little church in which we used to assemble Sunday after Sunday,—the pioneer church of this part of Africa. All its outlines are embedded in our memory. Its uneven mud-walls, its ragged grass roof, its scaffold-like

belfry, its unpretentious but homely aspect, will never be forgotten. Reclining in a bed of luxuriant and bright-coloured flowers, with the little bamboo gate through which we passed every Sunday up to the mud doorway; the pews fashioned out of packing-cases, and the harmonium, brought up with so much care, its notes so cracked and wheezy from the river voyage,—all this is gone, and now an ambitious edifice, somewhat out of plumb, with an aspiration after cathedral architecture, and its innovations of aisle, chancel, and altar, invite our weekly worship. How many of the old colonists look back with feelings of endearment to the home-like building they worshipped in so long ago!

How can new-comers picture to themselves the old days, not so very long ago, when lions slept under our windows in the verandah, and entered our kitchens, carrying off our cooks, butlers, and fowls, and dragging them to the wilderness to be devoured; how, as was the case when I was there, five lions were in the glen between us and Mandala, only a mile away; and how, when the *employés* attended church, they came armed with loaded rifles? All that



is past, and it is only we old colonists who can appreciate the change during the last few years. Do they remember how the manager of the African Lakes Company cleared the country of these carnivorous animals by placing meat covered with strychnine in the grass? do they remember how each day news came down from Mandala that another of the manager's donkeys had died from eating the grass that grew near this meat, and how each day another death was added to the melancholy roll, and how at last all the Company's donkeys, cats, and dogs had passed away? This is all in the past now, another era has arisen, the description of which I must relegate to a future historian.

I was sitting one day over my third cup of tea. Mr Henderson had already filled his teapot many times. I have heard from other people that forty cups was his regular allowance, but this wants confirmation. My friend Henderson was the pioneer of the mission. A more true-hearted and genuine man I have never met, despite his tea-drinking proclivities. He now lies under the reeds in the heretic part of the Quillimane graveyard. A native approached; he said that the great chief Chipitula had been

murdered by a white man. He stated that Mr Fenwick, whose girl-like wife was with us in the settlement, had sold ivory for Chipitula and brought back the proceeds, but a disagreement of the amount due to Chipitula had caused an altercation. Mr Fenwick, excited by this insinuation, drew his revolver and shot the chief dead. Rushing to the bank, he called on his people to re-embark and fly from the infuriated natives. His canoe had scarcely time to leave before the mariners were shot dead, and Fenwick jumped on the opposite side of the river, followed by hordes of maddened savages. Flying to a place of vantage on an ant-heap, he laid low with his rifle dozens of his foes. Numbers, however, proved too much, and a well-directed spear entered his heart: his head was cut off, and taken to Mbewe, a village ten miles up the river, where it was transfixed on the top of a bamboo pole. The great Chipitula was dead, killed by a white man, and we, as white men, were to pay the penalty. The natives were advancing on our settlement, and each hour might be that of their arrival. That was the story the native told us.

Messenger after messenger followed, repeating

the same news. The natives on the river, we were told, were holding conclaves, and had decided over their customary pots of beer that their chief should be avenged on the white men. Report after report came crowding in, some conflicting, some confirming what we had heard before, but all agreeing that Chipitula had been shot. Morning dawned at last after a tired and anxious night, during which the male members of the settlement took duty as sentinels. During the day fresh news of an alarming character was brought up, saying that Fredericks, the agent in charge at Katunga, had been killed, and the combined forces of the savages on the river were on the road to Blantyre. A council of war was held by the British. The manager of the African Lakes Company decided to take decisive measures to protect his agents and goods in the event of an attack, which appeared imminent. The chief of the mission said that he would await events, and trust to his well-known power of moral suasion, should the enemy arrive. The ladies and children put together a few articles of clothing, tied in small bundles, ready to fly to the mountains. The large house of the African Lakes Company was barricaded on the ground-

floor by sacks and empty cases filled with earth, in which loopholes were left to shoot through. Commanding the staircase leading to the upper storey were dozens of elephant-guns and old nails and slugs collected for ammunition. Sentries were posted in every spot. Later on we heard that the steamer Lady Nyassa, returning from the Zambesi with food and cloth, used as currency, had been captured, looted, and sunk at Mbewe, where the chief Chipitula was buried and Fenwick's head placed near on the pole. The natives all over the country were in arms, and threatening our settlement. Messengers were despatched to Matope, a station on the Upper Shiré, to warn the captain of the steamer Ilala, that plied on Lake Nyassa, of the state of affairs.

In a couple of days these messengers returned. They reported that the Matope chief had taken their companion prisoner and they had escaped. "The white men," the chief said, "have slain Chipitula, and I will kill every one that comes here." He then gave orders to put them in the *gorees*, or slave-sticks,—a heavy pole of wood with a fork at the end, in which the neck is strapped. Fastened in the *gorees*, they were

imprisoned in a hut to await their fate. During the night, however, they managed to escape, and eluding their guards, succeeded in returning to Blantyre. Calico and beads, which were our only currency and means of obtaining food, were almost exhausted, and starvation was not the least of the dangers that threatened us on all sides. An agent from the African Lakes Company was sent to Quillimane, overland, by a route hitherto untraversed. He skirted the enemy's country to procure calico. Mr G. carried despatches for our Government, telling them of the perils with which the colony was threatened. Our only hope of effectual communication with civilisation was by means of the steamer *Lady Nyassa*, and she was now at the bottom of the river in the enemy's country.

On Dr Livingstone's second arrival on the Shiré, he brought with him a number of native servants from the country of the Makololo, many miles up the Zambesi. He found the natives on the river under the rule of a chief called Chibisa, then aged, so that the petty headmen, while they nominally owned the sovereignty of the territorial chief, were in a great measure beyond his immediate control. Dr

Livingstone left five of his people on the river, and they, taking advantage of the disorganisation consequent on the temporary loss of influence of the old paramount chief, obtained a position for themselves, aided by their connection with the English, as chieftains on the river, and for a considerable time carried out a policy little removed from that of bandits and slave-raiders, until the whole river-bank on the east side was terrorised into submission to their rule. From these aliens, who have in reality no territorial title as chiefs, being all members of a distant and distinct race, the name of Makololo has been given to the people on the river, though they are connected in no way with them. Of the Makololo, Ramakukan occupied the eastern bank near the Murchison Rapids. Chipitula took possession of Chiromo and the vicinity. These two became practically the rulers of the eastern Shiré, including the Shiré highlands. The remainder had considerably less influence, and acquired little more than one or two villages, Katunga and Masea.

Mlauri, another of Dr Livingstone's *protégés*, was never anything more than a hanger-on of Ramakukan, and acquired no real position in

the country. He was chiefly employed by Ramakukan in heading slave-raids and expeditions against the neighbouring tribes, particularly against Chibisa, who still occupied the western territories of the Shiré.

Should the question ever arise, as it must do, with regard to the legal rights of chieftains, these Makololo can never in equity be considered as having any legal claims to this country. They are aliens by blood and characteristics, and have only succeeded in obtaining power through prestige from their connection with Europeans and their own unscrupulous proclivities. The lawful chief of the whole is undoubtedly the descendant of the old chief Chibisa, whom Livingstone found in possession only thirty years ago. The son of this chief still rules on the western bank, where he has succeeded in holding his own against Makololo adventurers. At the present day Masea and Mlauri are the only two left, Mlauri still carrying on his old tactics of pillaging and slave-raiding.

On Chipitula's decease, his son, Chikusi, a boy of about eighteen, educated in Blantyre Mission, and debauched by the vice of hemp-smoking, in which he indulged, kept the people in a state of

ferment against the English. Ramakukan, however, older and more intelligent, remained on our side, and Captain Foot, her Majesty's Consul, entered promptly into negotiations with him to effect the pacification of the people on the river.

Matters had by this time reached a very acute stage, and unless something were done to communicate with the outside world, we had nothing before us but starvation or a perilous flight overland. Volunteers were called for to go down the river, brave the open hostility of the people there, and make some endeavour to get back the steamer and reopen communication. The success of such an attempt was rather problematical, but it was the only thing that offered. The lives of women and children were dependent on the results. Three volunteered—Captain Foot, Mr Morrison, the chief engineer of the African Lakes Company, and the author. Taking one or two natives with us to carry our scanty baggage, we went armed with rifles and revolvers. We reached the river at Katunga the next night, and found the report of Fredericks's murder to be false, although he was in a state of considerable anxiety on account of his isolated position. Ramakukan met us here. He was an old wizened-faced man, with



one eye. He was dressed in a costume very similar to that of a music-hall acrobat, gaudy with bright-coloured silks. A half-caste youth attended him as secretary. There was a small dingy on the bank near the station, in which we intended going down the river. It was in a very bad state of repair, and took us two or three days patching it up before it was fit to put in the water. At the end of the third day it was launched, and our party, consisting of Captain Foot, Mr Morrison, Ramakukan, and myself, embarked.

The policy we were about to pursue, which appeared the only practical one, was to obtain Ramakukan's intervention with the boy chief Chikusi; and should there be any possibility of recovering the steamer, we would push forward the work, while Ramakukan was distracting the attention of the people in the council-house. If the steamer were too much of a wreck or in too deep water, our only hope of life was to dash down-stream and endeavour to obtain succour from the Zambesi. We flew down the current in the little crowded boat, past villages hidden amongst the dense vegetation. Now we were grazing a sandbank and using every effort to get

her off when she got aground, till at last the ominous crack of a gun saluted us as we neared the first village belonging to Chikusi and entered the enemy's country. Groups of armed natives kept up an incessant fire on us as we flew past. By great good fortune we escaped any damage from this desultory fire. One shot in our crank craft would have sent us to the bottom, when we could scarcely have expected more mercy from the crocodiles that swarmed in the water than from the savages on shore.

Three hours' paddling brought us in sight of the town of Mbewe, in front of which, in a small reach, we saw the white masts of the Lady Nyassa. The banks at this part were entirely deserted, a most ominous sign. Although we could see no one, we knew well our proceedings were being carefully watched by thousands of concealed natives. The steamer was stranded on a sandbank near the town. She was full of water and looted, many of her copper pipes being wrenched away. We ran the boat alongside and disembarked, leaving our rifles on board, armed only with revolvers, out of sight in our pockets. No sooner had we reached the top of the bank than we were surrounded by crowds of armed

people, many of them wearing portions of garments taken from the murdered Englishman and Mr Gouk, the captain of the steamer, who had escaped previously to Blantyre with nothing on but a palm-leaf.

Ramakukan disappeared immediately in the direction of the council-house, from which we could hear excited and angry altercations consequent on our arrival. Seeing the odds so much against us, our only chance of life, and that certainly a poor one, was to effect a demeanour of indifference to the hostile display of the natives. Apparently unarmed and defenceless, we separated and walked with an easy *nonchalance*, that we certainly did not feel, amongst the crowd, who, taken aback by the novelty of such an action on our part, so different from the cringing attitude they doubtless expected under the circumstances, were apparently at a loss to understand our motives, evidently imagining that we were justified in our bravado by the possession of some infernal machine, or other powerful and destructive agency only known to white men. On our left was the burial-place of Chipitula. On our right, fifty yards off, was the blackened skull of Fenwick, his hair bleached

white from the sun, and his eyeless sockets grinning downwards.

The crowd on the bank, discouraged in their attempt to strike terror into us by threats, dances, and contortions, melted away in the direction of the council-house, to which, in fact, all the natives collected. Now the coast was clear, we got on board the steamer. Captain Foot and myself, assisted by some of our followers, baled her out, and patched up the holes in her bow, while Mr Morrison worked hard at the engine, endeavouring to make good the damage done by the natives.

The night came on, by which time we had succeeded in clearing out the water in the steamer, and she floated above the bank. Mr Morrison and myself slept in the damp saloon, with loaded rifles by our sides and revolvers under the pillow. Captain Foot passed the night on shore in his tent, a few yards away. We had heard little of the result of the consultation in the council-house, except that Ramakukan had been successful in gaining over a few of the head-men to our side, though there were still many adherents to Chikusi crying for our blood, and demanding that our heads should be placed

near the ghastly remains of our countryman above us. This state of things went on for two days. On the evening of the second day Mr Morrison reported that the engine was so far repaired as to enable us to get up half-speed. We sent out men for fuel ; but these soon returned, saying that the followers of Chikusi had threatened with death any one who touched a tree. At midnight we ourselves went into the bush with rifles, and before morning had sufficient wood on board to warrant us making an attempt to escape.

At five o'clock the whole of the country was enshrouded in a white river-mist. Logs were put in the furnace, and before the mist arose the *Lady Nyassa* was out in the centre of the stream desperately struggling with the current. Our unexpected departure was heralded by a volley of musketry from the bank, but we were some distance up the river before the mist cleared. It was with considerable difficulty that we could make an appreciable headway against the stream. At times we stood still, and sometimes, rounding a sharp bend, almost seemed to be going astern. Our last lump of firewood had been thrown on the furnace, and we made a desperate effort to reach a clump of trees on the left bank. We had

scarcely enough steam to take us across, and just as the current caught our bows to drift us helplessly back to Mbewe, the grapnel thrown fastened itself in the canes on the bank. A dash was made on shore : the yells and cries of the infuriated natives, mingled with the fire of musketry, were heard following us up the banks. Every one, armed with hatchets, hacked at the brushwood ; rifles were brought out on deck, and a heap of cartridges placed handy. The natives on the opposite bank were embarking in canoes to attack the steamer. In a few minutes our decks were piled with boughs and branches, and the engineer was making every endeavour to get up steam from the green wood, during which we waited anxiously for the indicator to show us that there was sufficient pressure to warrant us in casting off the grapnel and fighting with the current. This anxious time, during which we were the target of both banks, passed at last, and we were again in the middle of the river, plunging desperately ahead. In another hour we were relieved to find ourselves out of the enemy's country. We replenished our stock of fuel, and by the evening arrived at Katunga, *en route* to Blantyre. The steamer was here put in dock

and thoroughly repaired, ready for a trip to the coast for supplies. Hope now arose in the breasts of the colonists. The African Lakes Company had, through us, regained their steamer, and communication with civilisation was in a fair way of being reopened.

I might mention *en passant* that Captain Foot and myself received, a short time afterwards, an account from the African Lakes Company debiting us with the cost of our passage back in the *Lady Nyassa* from Mbewe,—an instance of commercial 'cuteness that requires no comment.

## CHAPTER VI.

## A BOAT VOYAGE TO TETE.

HOSTILITY OF PORTUGUESE TO THE ENGLISH AT QUILLIMANE—  
 EFFORTS TO DETAIN THE EXPEDITION — UNDER ARREST —  
 ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE OUR CANOES — FOOD DIFFICULTIES—  
 ULTIMATUM FROM A *COMMANDANTE MILITAR* — ROUT OF THE  
*COMMANDANTE'S* FORCE—THE LUPATA NARROWS— A LIBATION  
 TO THE SPIRIT OF THE GORGE—ARRIVAL AT TETE.

IN the month of May 1890, I took charge of an expedition to Central Africa. The first part of the expedition had gone on by the Cape, consisting of three white men with several thousand pounds' worth of merchandise for use as currency. I had given instructions that our *impedimenta* should be passed through the Customs and await me at Vicenti, a village on the main stream of the Zambesi, eighty miles from its mouth. I myself went *viâ* Suez Canal to Zanzibar, where I obtained a number of Arabs, and Muhammed,



a native of Mombasa, as my chief, a man of considerable influence amongst the Arabs. We embarked on the Portuguese mail-steamer for Quillimane, which we reached in something less than two weeks.

The hotel proprietor at Quillimane was rather dubious at first whether he could give me accommodation, owing to the open hostility displayed at that time by the Portuguese in the colony against British subjects. Only a week before, he told me, a number of Englishmen dining at the hotel had been subjected to gratuitous insults from the Portuguese sitting at the same table; and, indeed, at that time there were few or no British subjects, from the Consul downwards, who were not openly insulted daily by the Portuguese residents. Notwithstanding the treatment my countrymen invariably received then, I made my mind up to live at the hotel, a course which I did not regret, in spite of the political reasons they doubtless had at that time to be unfriendly to me. I can only say that on no occasion whatever during ten years' residence in the colony have I received anything but the greatest courtesy and kindness from them, a return which often caused me heartfelt regret for the position

I was at times obliged by my nationality and convictions to take up.

The relations between British and Portuguese at that time were very much estranged, and every Englishman that arrived at Quillimane was looked upon with the greatest suspicion. I wished to go up country, and was told that before I should be allowed to leave the town for the interior, it was necessary for me to obtain two of the European merchants of high standing to be responsible for my actions, insomuch that I should make no engagements with inland chiefs. This of course was impossible for me, and it was, moreover, altogether an illegal demand on the part of the authorities. It was considered that by this means I should be prevented from carrying out my object. I obtained all the necessary legal documents except a passport, which entailed the fulfilment of the above restriction with regard to the two merchants.

Finding that every effort was being made to detain me illegally, I took matters in my own hands. I procured canoes for my Arabs and embarked, as the sun was going down, for up country. As I was stepping into my canoe a

Portuguese official came upon the pier, asking if I had my papers in order. I answered that I had everything necessary. He being in considerable doubt, as he was sent down specially to keep me from going, I told him that the best thing he could do was to get further instructions from his superior. While he was doing this I was on my way up-stream, not feeling it necessary to wait for his answer. Five days' journey through the swamp on the Quillimane river brought me to the vicinity of the Zambesi, where the rest of the expedition was awaiting me. This I joined, and meeting the *commandante militar*, the head official there, the next day, was informed that I was under arrest. I thanked him very much, and returned to my camp.

For two weeks I endeavoured to get canoes to carry our goods up the Zambesi, unsuccessfully, every canoe that came down being annexed by the Portuguese Government. I had a steel boat, built by Yarrow, and had bought another wooden boat that was fortunately for sale, and by these means transferred all the effects of the expedition ten miles up-stream to Missongwe, where there were no officials, I myself remaining

under arrest about my tent. The Governor-General, Senhor Machado, by good fortune arrived at this time, to whom I stated my case. I told him that I was informed I was under arrest for not having a passport, and he immediately wrote me out a passport for myself and for my people, and I left the next day for Misiongwe, where I found my expedition camped on the bank of the river.

The next few days were employed in sending my Arabs around the country amongst the native villages in search of canoes, and in a week's time I got together thirty canoes and one hundred and fifty mariners. The canoes were obtained with some difficulty, the Portuguese annexing every one they saw in the name of *El-Rei*, the Government, not troubling themselves about paying the owners or returning the canoes afterwards, so that every one who owned a canoe sank it under water in the reeds. Payment was given to the natives beforehand, as their experience with the Portuguese showed them that was the most probable way of getting it at all.

They were instructed to dash down before sunrise on Sunday morning. The few hours before light on that Sunday our camp was busy loading

up the canoes with bales of calico and beads, and as each was full they paddled off amongst the islands up-stream. Before the sun was up our tents were struck, and nothing remained of our camp except a few odd bones and kitchen refuse.

The news that I had obtained canoes had already reached the Portuguese officials at Mopea, and a force of soldiers was sent off double-march to annex these canoes for the Government. Before they got to the remnants of our camp our expedition was out of sight. Two or three unfortunate British merchants were filling up their own canoes at this time, and the officer in charge, feeling it necessary for his own dignity to seize canoes belonging to somebody, overturned the cargoes on the bank and took possession of the canoes in the name of the Portuguese Government, despite the heartrending explanations of their owners. He returned at once to his superior, who commended him for his zeal, and telegraphed down for a gunboat to follow our expedition. The gunboat taking some time, however, to get up steam, did not get near us until we were amongst the labyrinth of banks and islands at the confluence of the Shiré and

the Zambesi; and as the captain had an invitation for a "sing-song" at his former anchorage, he was naturally anxious to return before night, so that he did not prolong the search.

In two days we reached Senna, and pitched our camp on the left bank of the river, opposite the town. Inland from our camp the country rose up in a succession of high hills. To the south we overlooked a wide expanse of swamp on the Nhangome Island, a part of the great Morambala morass, shadowed over by a gigantic mass of granite—the Morambala mountain. Two miles over the river, at the foot of a small hill, were the white houses of Senna, one of the oldest of the Portuguese settlements on the Zambesi. It is reached by a labyrinth of shallow channels and mud-banks, and is surrounded on almost every side by low-lying swampy ground. Back from our camp the hills were clothed in dense thorn-scrub, infested with lions.

On Sunday morning we were off. One of my camp-servants had an altercation with a native on shore, in which the latter was slightly cut with a cane with which they were struggling. This native at once went over to the town. The officials thought this an excellent opportunity of

delaying my progress, and half a mile up-stream I was met by the police-boat, who demanded the arrest of the boy. Not wishing to delay so many people on so trivial a charge, I handed the police officer a few rupees to soothe the native's injured feelings,—a course which he considered highly satisfactory. This little matter finished, we proceeded on our up-river journey. We arrived at Nyakwasi a week afterwards, having experienced great difficulty in procuring food for the crowd of people. At places we were obliged to wait for a day, and camp on a bank while the grain was being ground into flour, and then only obtained sufficient food for two or three days longer. By dint of great economy and good fortune we succeeded in keeping enough food in camp, day by day, to feed every mouth.

At Nyakwasi we were met by a Portuguese official, who had come down that morning post-haste from the military station Gwengwe, a few miles up-stream, to prevent our expedition from proceeding farther. Finding our passports all in order, he told us that he had instructions from the Governor-General that no arms of any kind were to pass up the river, and brusquely demanded that everything down to a knife should

be given up to him. This outrageous demand, if conceded to, would naturally have meant our return to the coast. Although we had licences for all the weapons we carried, we were informed that they were valueless. Expostulating with him, the *commandante militar* struck a tragic attitude on the bank, and stated that "he was the law, and with a *commandante militar* everything was possible."

The position was rather a critical one, since we could not give up our weapons, which were used entirely for self-defence and protection for our effects, and did not wish to oppose the officials more than our own rights necessitated. I refused point-blank to carry out the outrageous and illegal demand of this discourteous Bumble. Finding this, he made an endeavour to attain his end by parading the available military force in the neighbourhood, while we pitched our tents for breakfast. A few minutes afterwards the force appeared. It consisted of two or three dozen boys and girls, old men and women, who marched with dignified pace in single line past our tent. Each of these was armed with a rusty flint-lock gun, evidently just picked out of the trading store, many of the guns requiring two children to carry



them. This imposing display was headed by the *commandante militar*, with drawn sword and ferocious aspect. The force marched three times round the station, and an ultimatum on official paper was gravely handed to me from the *commandante* demanding my immediate surrender. I had with me merely my Arabs, who were fully armed and equipped.

As they paraded round the last time to give extra force to the ultimatum, one of my Arabs went up to the army, and glaring at them with a hideous grimace, flung up his arms and said, "Psh!" whereupon a wild panic ensued, and the force disappeared in the most indescribable confusion out of sight behind the station, leaving several of their flint-locks on the ground, as their weight had evidently impeded the retreat. It was not, however, my wish to have brought matters to this climax, and I thought it necessary to severely reprimand the Arab for taking such decisive measures without permission.

After breakfast a deputation came from the canoe-men, who numbered in all a hundred and fifty, saying that they refused to go any farther, although an agreement had been made with them, and they had been prepaid for the voyage

as far as Tete. This plan was evidently the work of the *commandante*. The canoe-men on this river are most despicable and servile to the petty Portuguese officials, and a word from them was all that was wanting to cause every one to return home. Seeing this, I told the *commandante* that under certain conditions I would place in his hands eleven Arab swords which had been worn by them in Quillimane. They were carried more for show than use. For these the *commandante* gave me a receipt, saying that I should receive them from the British Consul when I returned. These swords have, however, been confiscated by the Portuguese Government, and despite many applications for them, have been retained, though by what legal right the head authorities acquiesce in such a theft I am not aware, as the only sufferers are the Arabs themselves, all of whom were British subjects.

During the afternoon we left Nyakwasi, and camped on a sand-bank three or four miles above. The canoe-men showed a decided disposition to run away, and it was only by sleeping on the islands in the centre of the stream, and by a vigilant guard of Arabs placed over

the canoes during the night, that we prevented them from doing so.

In three days' time we arrived at the Lupata narrows, on a rocky island at the entrance. The men all landed here, and during the afternoon and night were employed in plaiting ropes of palm-leaves for the purpose of passing up the gorge. The current is sometimes so strong along the banks, especially by the out-jutting rocks around which the eddies whirl, that it is impossible to paddle the small dug-outs, so that they have to be hauled along. Very often these green ropes snap, and the canoe or boat is overturned, so that lives are constantly being lost in this way during the passage; consequently the gorge has got a bad name among the native canoe-men. The sides of the gorge are precipitous mountains, coming down sheer into the water. The fissures and crevasses are filled with huge trees and overhanging tendrils. Amongst these trees, within a stone's-throw of the boat, were seen jumping and leaping thousands of baboons and monkeys, who followed us up hand over hand amongst the branches with an incessant squealing and chattering. Here and there we heard the frightened cry of an antelope, and

a shower of gravel rattled down the rocks into the water as it leaped out of sight into the brushwood.

On our left in front stood up a curious peak, at the summit of which was the fantastic resemblance in black granite of a priest making an offering at a rude altar. This natural statue is called by the natives the *padre*, and it is customary on its coming into sight amongst the mountains looming up against the sky to make a libation to propitiate the spirit of the gorge, whose minister the *padre* is supposed to be. The libation consists of a bottle of spirits. This is given to the crew, and poured into the stream. In anticipation of the custom, and not caring to throw away any of our scanty stock of liquor, I furnished them with a bottle carefully recorked containing river-water. This was handed forward to the captain of the men. A suspicious hunt was made at the bottom of the boat for a knife to open it, and the bottle, apparently open, was held over the side with much ceremony, and the contents poured into the river to the satisfaction of every one.

The crew were now anxious to land for the mid-day meal, and were in the highest of spirits.

Anchoring the boat on a sandy beach, and without waiting for their rations to be doled out, I was astonished to see them jump on shore and scamper in a body over the sand, headed by the captain, laughing and dancing. The captain seemed to have something concealed under his arm, which was evidently the attraction. They stopped about a hundred yards away and formed a circle, of which the captain occupied the centre. After a short interval, during which the captain was busy at something, I saw him produce a bottle, which I had little doubt was my offering to the river, and which I had supposed had been duly emptied. The end of this bottle appeared above the heads of the circle of men, who had their eyes fixed on the captain in anxious anticipation, holding out their hands in readiness. The bottle did not remain long in this position, when a consultation seemed to be going on, during which the bottle was handed slowly and suspiciously round, apparently undergoing a smelling process. Being evidently dissatisfied with the contents, the bottle was thrown away, and emptied itself in the sand. The captain and mariners returned with lugubrious and perplexed countenances to the boat.

The river, which lower down has the enormous width of two or three miles, is here in places scarcely more than a thousand yards across. I have taken the greatest pains to find out if at any time of the year steamers would have any difficulty in passing it, and although I have navigated it at all seasons, both wet and dry, I have ascertained, to my satisfaction, that neither from the excessive current which one would suppose would be found in so narrow a gorge, nor from deep-lying rocks in the channel, is there any obstacle to be encountered from one extremity to the other; nor is there indeed any difficulty to navigation for suitable steam-craft from the Chinde mouth as far up as the Acababassa<sup>1</sup> Falls. The current in the gorge during the dry season is indeed so imperceptible, that I am unable to account for the phenomenon otherwise than by the supposition of an underground channel.

At the northern extremity is a vast pile of

<sup>1</sup> The derivation of the word Acababassa is not, as given by some, "cebra" and "baça," fancifully translated, "Break the spleen," but is undoubtedly "acaba" and "bassa," signifying "Work is finished." This is the local pronunciation, and is given to this place on account of the fact that at both ends of the falls the engagement of native transport on the river ceases, owing to the impossibility of navigating farther.

mountains rising straight up out of the river to a height of two or more thousand feet. The face of this mountainous wall was tinted with bright brown and red, flecked here and there with broad lines of pure white gneiss. The ragged summit was topped by a band of dark green that stood out in startling distinctness against the cloudless sky. The vegetation, filling the huge fissures and rents, gradually diminishing in width as they meandered down the face of the precipices, gave the appearance, from their rivulet-like streaks of green, of being the overflow of the vegetation above. The gigantic and cyclopean wall reflected itself in the broad river dashing past the yellow sands at its base. All its brilliant colours, its æsthetic hues, its sharp outlines, its dashes of tints, were mirrored in the limpid waters of the great Zambesi. Away to the westward could be seen isolated peaks, and the river wound through a rich and fertile country.

At the Luena we come across the most rapid and healthy route to Mashonaland in the south, and the next day arrived at Tete, opposite the Revugwe river, which drains the Makanga country to the north.

## CHAPTER VII.

## FROM TETE TO ACABABASSA.

DESCRIPTION OF TETE—DOMESTIC SLAVERY—THE ACABABASSA FALLS—DR LIVINGSTONE—JÉSUS IGNAÇIO—AN OFFICIAL MASSACRE—ATROCITIES BY HALF-CASTES—EXPEDITION ALONG THE FALLS—A CROCODILE TRAGEDY—LION ADVENTURES—CROSSING THE RIVER—RETURN TO CAMP.

TETE is a rambling town built on a bare sand-heap on the right bank of the river. It has an ancient and interesting history, but has now fallen wofully into decay. The first that is seen of it coming up the river is a huge fort, capable of holding several thousand troops. There is no water-supply in the fort, so that the condition of a besieged garrison boxed up in it would be one of extreme peril. It was doubtless built as a trap to entice an invading army inside, to lock them up until they got so thirsty that they would be obliged to surrender



unconditionally. The officer who designed it evidently possessed a military genius for subtle strategy, rare even amongst the Portuguese. The garrison of the fort at present numbers half the troops in the town, which must at least be twenty-four people, not including wives and children.

The impression given to one on first visiting the town is that of a settlement of uncertain age erected in the middle of a desert. Two or three of the older houses are built replete with every comfort for the tropical climate; but the greater part are much in want of repair, and present a sad aspect of poverty. There are few communities in which a new-comer, no matter of what nationality, is so certain of being received with genuine hospitality and kindness. Life in this town for the residents without this characteristic would be almost unbearable. The visitors are few, the community a small one, and every stranger is for a time a link with the outside world. The leading merchants keep open tables, at which every one of standing in the settlement finds a place and welcome. The native population live in a medley of huts on the outskirts.

Tete has been subject at many times to famine,

and the loss of life amongst the blacks is often appalling. In 1886 the dead and dying were left exposed for days in the public streets for want of people to bury them, and on my arrival I often came across skulls and bones gnawed by the pigs in the outskirts. There is a curious custom in Tete which still clings to the people. Smoking one day with a friend in the cool dining-room, a native lad rushed in from the street, seized a plate from the table where we had lunched, dashed it on the floor, and flung himself on the ground before my host. I asked for an explanation, and was told that this was a relic of the old slave-days, when in times of famine people would thus demand assistance from the whites, as the breaking of a plate or vase was a symbol of slavery, and a native, in doing this, made himself by the act a slave of the owner of the piece of crockery. Often articles of value are destroyed in this way; and so hard does custom die, that even to-day the occurrence is not uncommon where natives voluntarily endeavour to make themselves slaves and dependants of the residents. A house-dependant or slave is a position for which there are as many applicants as for a Govern-

ment post in Europe. This is not remarkable, for they are kindly treated. They have the best of food, they are clothed and well cared for, and have no more anxiety, in famine or plenty, for the rest of their lives. They are looked up to by their people, and have little to do in return, it requiring some dozen of these slaves to do the ordinary day's work of an English domestic.

Our fleet of canoes and boats landed on the beach above the governor's house, past the cemetery. The merchandise was piled on the sand, and the canoe-men lost no time in paddling away down the stream, so that there only remained the Arabs, four white men, the servants, and two boats.

We were two weeks encamped on the beach before we were able, through the good offices of Senhor Martinez, to procure boatmen to convey our merchandise as far as the Falls, three days beyond. The governor gave me a letter of introduction to the coloured official who acted as administrator or *capitão Mór* of the country in the vicinity of Acababassa.

I intended, if possible, to obtain carriers there to pass beyond the Falls to the upper river, to strike off into the unknown country to the north.

To do so, a large number of natives had to be obtained to carry the camp effects and stores; probably from five hundred to a thousand men would be necessary to take up everything.

For the first day up the river we passed through flat country covered with great plantations of mangoes, oranges, lemons, and pine-apples, besides many other tropical fruits. In some places these plantations covered an area of two or three miles. The fruit is produced in such enormous quantities that there is practically no consumption for the greater part. Now that there is steam communication with the coast, the fruit industry will doubtless be a very important and remunerative one. After twenty miles the flat country ceases and becomes again mountainous, the Makanga plateau rising from the river's edge.

The Jesuit mission of Boromo was passed on the right bank, and on the afternoon of the third day we arrived at the foot of the Acababassa rapids. Great slabs of amorphous rocks were piled up along the banks, and in places were scattered over the surface of the river. We worked our way up with considerable difficulty amongst the sharp crags, narrowly escaping at

times being caught and overturned in the swirls and whirlpools caused by the rushing current. Every effort was made to push on to the farthest point possible for our boats, and it was not until our further passage was stopped by huge granite boulders and seething eddies that we turned to the shore and fixed our last river-camp. Five hundred feet above a sandy cave in which our boats were moored was a huge fig-tree, and under its widespreading branches we pitched our tents. Our prospects for the future were not very bright.

After struggling two months or more to overcome the obstacles in the water-way, the expedition now found itself stranded in a hopeless *cul-de-sac*. The friendly river, which had brought up so easily our large quantity of *impedimenta*, no longer helped us, and we had perforce to sit down in camp surrounded by piles of merchandise, without apparently the remotest possibility of proceeding another mile on our journey. Around us were rugged, inhospitable mountain-peaks. Below the camp, on a sandy ridge, were a few scattered huts of poverty-stricken natives. On the opposite bank a wide expanse of dazzling sand reflected burning heat in the day, and at

night wafted over to us the resonant roars of the lions that inhabited its fastnesses. Beyond, piled up tier after tier, rose the highlands of the distant Makanga, whom we were led to consider, from local reports, as more ferocious and to be dreaded than our noisy leonine neighbours.

The spot at which we landed, called Massanangwe, marks the limit of the navigation on the Lower Zambesi. It was here Dr Livingstone disembarked from the Ma Robert steamer and travelled overland to the upper waters, some thirty or forty miles above. There was a baobab-tree near our camp on which the words "Ma Robert" are still discernible, cut in the bark when the Doctor's expedition passed. The wheels on which he transported the steamer are in the possession of a merchant at Missongwe, where one of Dr Livingstone's servants still lives, though old and imbecile. It is curious how the name of the Doctor has lingered in the memory of the people all over the country, and he is always spoken of as the first and greatest white man, and in no other terms than that of the sincerest admiration.

After remaining several days in our camp, J3sus Ign3cio, the representative of the Portu-

guese in this place, to whom the Governor at Tete had given me a letter, arrived. He was a typical *Muzungu*—i.e., an offspring of half-castes, perhaps more negro than otherwise. He had attained considerable power, and was a factor which the Portuguese had to consider very seriously in their administration. He had certainly an appreciable quantity of European blood, though it was quite indiscernible in his features and colour, which were pure negro. Formerly a petty trader in Tete, he had by force of character collected round him a number of Adullamite adherents. With these ne'er-do-weels he raided and pillaged the inhabitants of the district, constantly increasing his force, until he became the recognised power over a large tract of country. The stories of cruelty and barbarism with which his name is connected may not all be unexaggerated, though there is little doubt that he could never have obtained the position he holds without carrying out a policy wholly divergent to feelings of humanity as known to the civilised world ; but perhaps the exigencies of the savage surroundings may be taken as an excuse, palliating in some measure a Draconian despotism.

While talking of the cruelties practised, or sup-

posed to be practised, by these half-castes, a little incident of the Portuguese method of civilising this country may not be out of place. Near our camp in the village was a large round building. Two or three months before we arrived, a Portuguese expedition reached this place under the command of Senhor L. This European had been sent up by the Government to acquire concessions on the Upper Zambesi. He had what was called a secret commission, which placed him above every official in the colony. Arriving, he found considerable difficulty in obtaining porters to carry his effects over the falls. After two months' search a number of natives collected, and agreed for the usual payment to act as porters. Amongst these natives many had come from the opposite bank of the river, and belonged to the Makanga people, with whom the Portuguese were on unfriendly terms. Senhor L. placed all his loads in this building, and instructed the porters to go in and select their individual burdens. The crowd of natives filed in to the house, and were busily employed in choosing their respective loads. Senhor L., animated by a desire to revenge the grievances of his Government against the Makanga, a few of whom were in the house



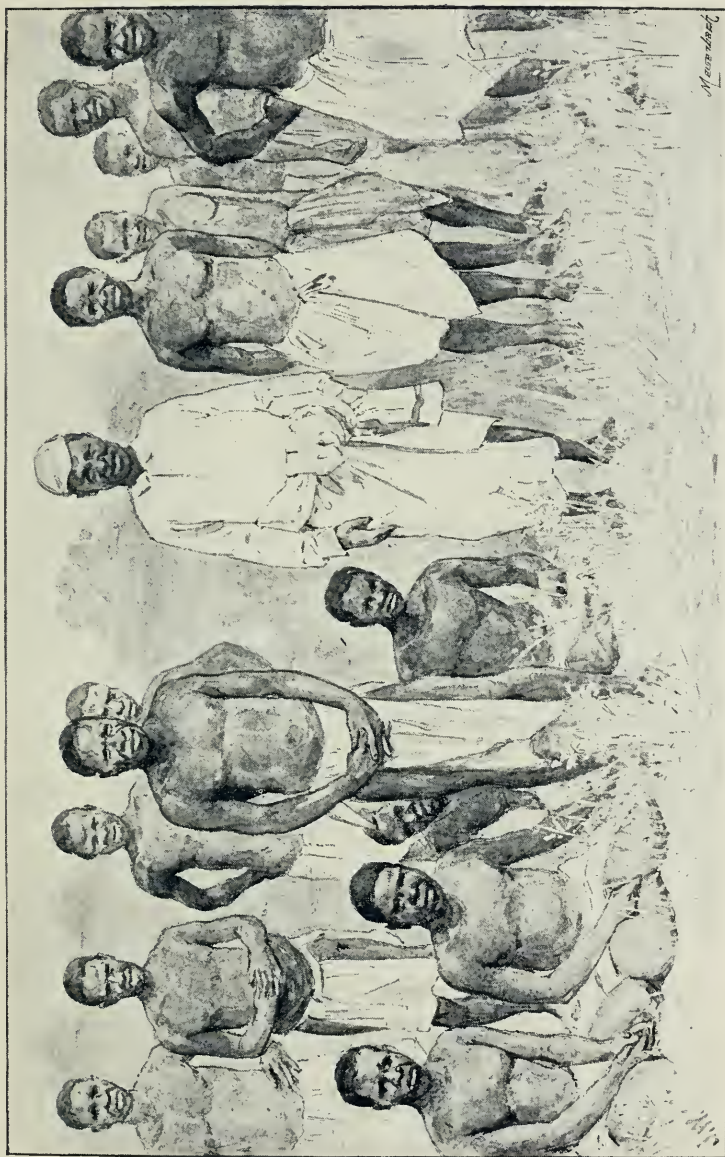
mingled with Portuguese subjects, entered the door, accompanied by two of his officers. Taking out their revolvers, they commenced a murderous fire on the unfortunate porters. A scene ensued that can only be fitly described in the words of Kingsley as "a murder grim and great." Twenty-three were shot dead, falling over the baggage; a number rushed past and escaped; twenty others were captured and imprisoned in the dungeons at Tete, where they rotted and died.

This official, from his position, could not, unfortunately, have received his just merits from the Governor of Tete. This wholesale murderer has not even been reprimanded, and it is by such foul and inhuman actions on the part of unprincipled adventurers, supported by the Government, that so much injury has been done to Portuguese interests in this country. The corpses of the murdered were flung into the river to be devoured. Some wounded reached the other bank, where they lay down to die amongst the trees. Their skulls and skeletons I came across in the jungle five months afterwards.

A little farther up the river there is a Portuguese official, a lieutenant-colonel and adminis-

trator. He is interested in hunting, and presides at the banquets usually given to huntsmen before starting. This feast is a curious one, and derives some importance from the fact that it is presided over and encouraged by a dignitary ablaze in a Portuguese uniform. The hunters are grouped round. In the centre of the circle is placed a mortar used for grinding corn. In this mortar is some flour, from which is made the hunters' dish, to ensure good luck. It is eaten only by hunters of the Government official. Songs and dances follow, and preparations are made to knead the flour. A boy of four or five years is led up to the centre of the circle. The frightened child is held over the flour, and a sharp knife adds another victim to this frightful custom. The blood and flour are made into a cake for the hunters, and the mutilated corpse is given back to the weeping mother. An acquaintance of mine happened to arrive on the scene of one of these sacrifices, and he showed me a chubby little fellow of six years old that he had rescued at the last moment; but I fear another, quite as chubby and innocent, had been supplied in his place.

Many veracious stories of this nature could be told, not of what has been culled from medieval



BONGA'S SON AND FOLLOWERS.



demonology, but what is transpiring at the present moment, in sight of the Portuguese flag, in this darkest part of darkest Africa.

Bonga, another of these Muzungus, had in a certain degree a facetious disposition. His chief town was on the banks of the Zambesi river near the Lupata, called Sungo. Promenading with his court on the sands of the river, instigated by *ennui* and a brutish ferocity inherent in this class of people, he would watch the numberless heads of crocodiles floating idly in the stream. Calling to one of his *cortége* who stood trembling behind, he would say to him, "My friend, see my children ; do they not look hungry ?" The attendant, his teeth chattering with fear, his limbs shaking, and his eyes starting from his head, would answer, "My lord, they are hungry." Then Bonga would turn with a grim smile on his face and say quietly, "My friend, why should they be hungry when there is food ? Give them of our abundance ; go, friend, and feed them ; my children must not starve." Darting his eyes around like a terrified animal, the unfortunate sees no compassionate face on any side. Fear has paralysed his brain. He answers, "My lord, I go to feed them." Like one in a dream

he staggers down to the water's edge into the river. The brutes rush upon him. There is a piercing shriek, the ruffled waters are tinged with red, and Bonga's children are fed. Bonga, a cold placid smile on his face, walks back to the town, hardly amused with the incident. Often on these occasions he is not satisfied with a man, but despatches one of his dependants to bring his young spouse, whose ghastly fate and the agony of her lover afford him a few minutes' entertainment.

To recount what happens at the present day on the upper waters of this great river would be a history so revolting and repugnant to every instinct of humanity, or even of savagedom, that it can have no place in these pages. The wildest flights of delirium could scarcely conjure up the brutalities possible to a negroid Portuguese unbridled by any control or restriction to the exercise of most infamous and degraded passions. During the last year the Government have awakened to a knowledge of their responsibilities, and have shown an energy that gives great promise for the future welfare of, and civilisation in, these vast regions. The lethargy of the past has given place to an administration

fully cognisant of the importance of immediate and decisive action. The process of sweeping away these enemies of humanity has commenced, and every well-wisher must hope that the present policy will be carried out with energy and thoroughness.

After a month waiting on Senhor Ignácio, occupied in mutual invitations to dinners and convivial evenings, I was informed by his aide-de-camp that he could procure me six men at £6 apiece to go ten miles with my goods. I merely wanted a thousand men to go two hundred miles, so that his offer hardly improved my situation. By this time matters had become far too serious to rely any further on this obliging representative of the Portuguese Government. Food was getting short in camp, there were a large number of people to feed, and impatience was shown amongst the members of the expedition at the delay. It was evidently a ruse on the part of the Portuguese to get me up in this *cul-de-sac*, as my not being able to procure carriers to proceed farther would naturally force me to abandon the expedition and return ignominiously to the coast.

The country on the north bank was inhabited



by a tribe of Makanga, who had already defeated a Portuguese force, and killed the officers. No native belonging to the Portuguese on the south side where I was camped dared even to sleep on the opposite bank. To ask porters to accompany me out of sight of the water was met with derision. As a stranger, I knew little of the Makanga except from the reports I heard from the Portuguese, who considered that fifty miles was the nearest they could approach a native of Makanga with security. The whole of the opposite bank was deserted, and I did not know how far inland was the first Makanga town; indeed I did not care very much to find out, for I considered that the Portuguese must have had good reasons for their estimation of the hostility of these people to Europeans. I thought that by passing up the side of the falls I might possibly encounter natives on the outskirts of the Makanga territory who would enable me at least to move from my present position.

Early one morning I got together four Arabs, a boy to carry a blanket, two or three boxes of sardines and biscuits for my own use, left my officers in charge of the camp and goods, and crossed the river to reconnoitre. For two days





CENTRAL AFRICAN CO.'S STATION, MAKANGA COUNTRY.



we trudged over burning rocks, and slept at night on the sand, serenaded by a ring of lions. The whole country was deserted, not a house or habitation of any kind was to be seen. Now and then we found tracks leading into the interior, and followed them up for several miles, but not meeting with water, were forced to return and resume our toilsome march over the scorching sand on the Zambesi. As soon as we reached the rushing waters, our tongues dried up in our mouths, and we plunged our heads into the cool stream, regardless of the crocodiles swarming around. I never knew till that time the delight of a temperance drink. I have tasted whisky since, but it has never given me the satisfaction and exhilarating pleasure I got when dipping my heated head in the blue cold Zambesi, expecting every moment it would be nipped off by a crocodile. While we were drinking, one of our party splashed the water with his hands, shrieking out at the top of his voice to frighten off the crocodiles.

Alfen, a smart little fellow with bright eyes, who was carrying my small stock of provisions, left us as we were eating our dinner and went down to the stream. We paid no attention to

him at the time, as we were occupied in eating. One of us, however, glancing down the bank, saw the little boy, who was the life and soul of our camp and loved by every one, with his head in the river drinking up the cool water. We had told him so often of the danger of approaching the bank, that we never thought he would be so heedless as to put his life in such great peril ; but thirst, such as only those know who have been tramping over hot sands under a fierce tropical sun, had led him to brave everything. He was but a child. There was no one in camp who would not have given up his life for him. His prattle and laughter buoyed us up, and enabled us to continue our perilous march. Without him the camp would have been dead and disheartened, and every one treated him as if he were an only son. Unconscious of his indiscretion, he drank in the luscious nectar, ignorant of a black object approaching him insidiously in the water. Every one left his meal and jumped up to warn him of his imminent danger. It was too late : the boy, not knowing of his impending doom, remained in the same position. A fate more horrible can hardly be imagined : our hearts leaped to our mouths to see one so

liked by all the camp butchered before our eyes. The crocodile, now certain of its prey, glided near his head. Our tongues were paralysed ; we could not utter a sound ; the whole thing was too sudden, too appalling. The spirit and life of our camp was lost, and a fearful tragedy was about to be enacted, a tragedy that few have witnessed. At this moment the boy stood up, wiped his mouth in a satisfied manner with the back of his hand, and returned to the camp. The crocodile snapped at the place where his head was, coughed up a few pounds of sand, and sank disgusted into the depths. This is only one of the many tragedies daily enacted in this country.

Nowhere in Africa have I seen more lions in one place than are to be found amongst the boulders and sand strewn along the sides of these rapids. In every direction are their imprints, some of them of such great size that they seem almost elephantine. Walking alone one day amongst the rocks without a rifle, a lion jumped up in the path. We were in a gully. He sprang twenty paces from me, and buried his head and shoulders between two rocks, leaving half of his body exposed, after the popular manner of the

ostrich when hunted in the desert. As I had no weapon with me, I missed one of the easiest shots I ever had in my life ; and doubtless this lion, informing his relations of the happy result of his expedient, will lead a great number of others to imitate the feathered biped, unless, like many other unfortunate *raconteurs* of veracious experiences, it should get undeservedly the name of being a most unprincipled liar.

On another occasion I sent on by one of my officers, Mr Hanner, a young Englishman, a quantity of goods, which he piled up in a circle around him breast-high on a waste of sand. During the night, which was a brilliant moonlight one, three lions came down and danced for his amusement around the enclosure. He had one servant with him whose features generally were black, but which, though unwashed by a well-advertised or any other soap, were now almost as white as H.'s. A few yards away flowed the Zambesi, on the surface of which, as if from the pit, a number of crocodiles' heads were interestedly watching the entertainment. A young lion approached within a few feet of H., and evidently being the *première danseuse*, executed a *pas-de-seul*, sticking the claws of her hind legs deep into the sand,

while the two others behind acted as chorus to the leonine ballet. At the termination of this performance, the pit, not having any hands to clap, snapped their jaws, and the chorus roared out their appreciation. H. shivered, and the negro behind tried to turn whiter, but could not. The pit retired to the bottom of the river, the leonine *première danseuse*, followed by her supporters, trotted over the sands to hunt up a fat buck for dinner, while the two inside the enclosure remained sleepless until dawn, when I arrived, having witnessed a performance that is best appreciated through the bars of a menagerie.

On the afternoon of the third day we came unexpectedly on an encampment in a well-wooded park-like tract of country. Leaning against the trees were packages of merchandise neatly bound up in native bark-cloth; beneath them were bows and arrows. Over the smouldering fires were roasting strings of elephant-meat and dried fish, but not a single native was to be seen. Peering about in the jungle to endeavour to discover the occupants of the camp, who had evidently taken fright at our approach, we at last perceived, on the summit of a precipitous crag a thousand feet above us,

a number of black objects, which we at first took for baboons, but soon found were natives, who appeared to be eagerly watching our movements. We tried everything to convince them of our friendliness, without success: they had mistaken us for an expedition of Makanga, and were a trading caravan belonging to the Portuguese side of the river. Half a mile away on the bank, buried amongst the rocks, was a Portuguese village, to which these traders were evidently bound. Beneath it were drawn up two small canoes used as a ferry.

Finishing a light meal, we left this camp and endeavoured to proceed higher up the river. After half an hour's walk among the trees, we found ourselves hemmed in on all sides by impassable walls of granite. Wending our way with great difficulty up the dry bed of a mountain-torrent, we were at last obliged to retrace our steps, and it was nearly sundown when we arrived at our former camping-place at the river-bank. The terrified owners of the camp were still ensconced on the summit of the crags; their fires had gone out, and their meat and fish had fallen, burnt, into the embers. The river at this place presented the aspect of



a large pool. A mile up and down stream it was surrounded by masses of rock and granite, through whose fissures the water foamed and roared in numberless cascades. It was full of crocodiles, and their heads floated in every part like black logs.

Our food was now nearly finished, and forced us to make an effort to return to the main camp. We tried everything to induce the people in the opposite village to ferry us over in their canoes, but not one could be prevailed upon to approach within gun-shot. To attempt to cross the river without a canoe was so suicidal, that I dared not ask for volunteers. Leaving the men to themselves to talk the matter over, I went down with my rifle to the river-bank. A few minutes afterwards my interpreter and another young fellow came up to me and asked permission to attempt the passage across, which with considerable reluctance I gave. The four Arabs who were with me, armed with Martinis, I placed in commanding spots along the bank, and taking up a good position myself with my express rifle, we held ourselves in readiness to cover the swimmers in their perilous passage. These, divesting themselves of their

clothes, plunged in, and their two heads were carried gradually down by the current near the centre of the pool and the vicinity of the swarm of black logs, which, although motionless, we knew to be only waiting a favourable opportunity to seize our gallant comrades. The interpreter was ahead by a dozen yards, when suddenly, between him and his companion, we noticed a ripple in the water, and another black log in motion appeared on the surface. The moment was a very critical one, and, from the relative positions of the swimmers and the crocodile, it offered a most difficult shot. Fortunately the swimmers were apparently unaware of their terrible peril. As the crocodile approached the interpreter, he suddenly opened his huge jaws, and churning the water, prepared for his fatal rush. By this time the whole swarm, reinforced by many others who had hitherto been invisible under the surface, commenced to move in a body, and dash in to get their share of the human prey. Things looked very black for the two brave swimmers. A shot from the express, however, followed almost instantaneously by the four Martinis, rendered the first crocodile *hors de combat*; and

he had hardly sunk with a convulsive snap when, terrified by the roll of musketry, which reverberated with a hundred echoes from the neighbouring rocks, the whole swarm of cowardly though ferocious brutes had disappeared below the surface, and the two black heads of the swimmers were the only objects visible. Getting now out of the current, a few powerful strokes brought the two on shore, when we greeted their safe arrival with a hearty cheer. The owners of the canoes had fled, and in a quarter of an hour we had the satisfaction of landing on the opposite bank, followed closely afterwards by the natives, whom we had disturbed.

We slept that night in holes dug in the beach. The object of the trip had turned out a total failure, and the difficulties of getting away seemed more hopeless than ever, so that without loss of time we returned to the main camp. Here food was at a very low ebb, and our rations could scarcely last two weeks longer.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THROUGH THE MAKANGA COUNTRY.

A RECONNOITRING EXPEDITION—ITS SUCCESS—ILLNESS OF MR SERJEANT—THE MARAVI—ANGONI RAIDERS—TOWNS BUILT ON SUMMITS OF MOUNTAINS—THE RAINY SEASON—A STORM—UN-INVITED GUESTS—SATISFACTORY NEGOTIATIONS WITH MAKANGA CHIEF—ARRIVAL AT KAMSIKI—RECEPTION BY CHIKUKULA—RETURN TO BLANTYRE.

ON the evening of my arrival at the main camp I called a meeting of all the members to discuss ways and means. I asked for volunteers, and every one immediately offered his services. Picking out three of the most likely Arab soldiers, I gave them instructions to be in readiness, armed and equipped with four days' provisions, to start two hours before daylight the following morning, under the charge of the head Arab, Muhammed.

The plan I had hit on, and which indeed seemed the only means left to us of extricating

ourselves from our present predicament, was that this pioneering party should reconnoitre the apparently deserted country on the opposite bank. They were to follow up the dry bed of a stream we could see from our camp. They were to keep on for two days, and if at the end of that time they did not meet with inhabitants, they were to return. Should they, however, encounter people of a peaceable disposition, they were to make overtures to them to come down to the bank of the river and carry up to their own country our goods and merchandise. Long before daybreak the next morning the steel boat had ferried the reconnoitring party across the river, under cover of the darkness, to prevent the neighbouring villagers on our side from suspecting our movements. The party was soon lost to view up the bed of the stream, and the boat returned.

For four days we waited without any news. Arabs were stationed and scanned with glasses the dazzling expanse of rocks and sand on the opposite bank for signs of their return. The fifth day passed; they had not come back, and we grew anxious on their account, knowing they had only four days' provisions. Fearing some

accident or misfortune had happened to our party in the unknown country to the north, on the evening of the fifth day I turned up all hands for inspection : a force of twenty rifles was selected ; food for four days was packed in loads to be divided amongst the men, and blankets for sleeping. The rest were told off to remain in charge of the camp and goods. Marching orders were given for daybreak in the morning. I had determined to accompany them to see what had become of our advance-party, and, if necessary, to succour them.

Next morning all hands were ready and fully equipped, and about to embark on the boat for the other side of the river. At this moment our attention was arrested by the sharp ping of a rifle from the midst of the boulders. Orders were immediately given for the men to return to camp, and a glass showed me that the firer of the rifle was one of the Arabs belonging to the reconnoitring party. He appeared at first to be alone, but moving my glass over the sand, I discerned, crouched by a rock a thousand yards away, a solitary native. Looking farther up the bank where the trees edged the great expanse of sand, I saw under a gigantic mimosa - tree a

black mass of natives, numbering from four to five hundred, armed with guns, bows, and spears. Rightly surmising from the action of the single Arab near us that great caution should be used, I embarked on the boat, crossed the river, sent the boat back, and approached myself, alone and unarmed, over the sand till I met the Arab. From him I learned that the party had followed up the stream for ten miles until nightfall without encountering any signs of people or habitations; at night, however, sleeping on the summit of a hill, they saw some miles off a number of fires at the top of a high mountain, Chuuta. The next day they continued their journey to this mountain, and three thousand feet up found themselves among native gardens, huts being visible two and three thousand feet above them. Their appearance created great consternation amongst the inhabitants, and it was with considerable difficulty that they satisfied the people of their peaceful intentions, and induced them to come down from the rocks. After some discussion, two of the party were detained as hostages, and Muhammed, with the remaining Arab, came down to the river with five hundred carriers.

Being very suspicious that it was a ruse on the part of the Portuguese to entrap them, they remained some distance away under the trees, sending down one of their party to see if I were an Englishman or a Portuguese. The native who was now scrutinising me approached with considerable hesitation. Being at length satisfied, he returned to his people. I sent over at once to the camp for my tent, chair, and cooking gear, which I pitched at some distance from the beach among the trees; the fire was lit, and preparations made for a meal. By this time the natives, with Muhammed, had left the tree and defiled into the glade in which my tent was pitched, and surrounded me in a large ring, squatting on the ground with their weapons in their hands. My tactics for inspiring confidence were soon successful; the arms were left resting against the trees, preparations made in camp for cooking and sleeping, and the glade dotted over with scores of fires. In the meantime I succeeded in getting my goods on this side of the river, and the next day our river-camp was deserted.

One of our party,—Mr Serjeant,—a young Englishman, at this point proved so unfit, from



an attack of sunstroke and fever, to proceed any farther that he was despatched with the boats to the coast. Only one Englishman remained with me, Mr Hanner. As the natives who had come down to carry our goods were not sufficient to take all our loads, I left Mr Hanner in charge of what remained, and set off at once for the interior on October 28.

Our road for the first few miles was a steep ascent. We reached an undulating park-like country two thousand feet above the sea. It was well wooded and watered. A number of isolated peaks were passed, and the first night we pitched our camp in a forest of bamboos by the side of the Namazi stream.

We left early in the morning before daybreak. In front of us towered up a magnificent pile of mountains some eight thousand feet in height. Our long line of porters defiled up a ravine, and entered a pass three thousand feet above sea-level. Here we found ourselves in an amphitheatre, enclosed by three peaks rising two and three thousand feet above us. On the very summit of these crags we could discern small brown huts and numbers of natives, like black ants, dotting their precipitous sides. Around

were gardens and plantations. We traversed the valley and encamped on one of the out-jutting spurs, surrounded by thousands of the curious inhabitants.

These people are a remnant of the Maravi tribe, which formed at one time the great Undi empire. They have been greatly ravaged by the predatory peoples in the vicinity, more particularly the Angoni tribes, a species of Zulu. To escape from their constant attacks, they have built their towns and villages on the summits of the most inaccessible peaks, only descending for water and the cultivation of their gardens.

As soon as my camp was ship-shape, I had an interview with the local head-man, called Biwi, whom I found to be the representative of the Makanga chief, and for the first time learnt I was under the jurisdiction of these people. The chief resided some three days' journey away on the Revugwe river. I lost no time in preparing a present for him, which I despatched by local natives. Meanwhile a large number of people returned to the river to bring up the remaining goods and Mr Hanner, while I set about building a permanent residence.

The rainy season had now well commenced,

and we naturally suffered many inconveniences from the inclement weather. My followers had rigged up temporary shelters under the lee of the boulders that strewed the mountain-side. My own tent was fairly waterproof at the top, but during a storm there was often one or two inches of rushing water over the floor, so that I had to remove it to a drier spot in a native tobacco-garden. It was not until ten o'clock in the morning that we saw the sun, when he appeared on the top of the peak above us. For three hours he blazed down with a scorching heat, and disappeared over the westward summit of the gully.

During the rains the neighbouring mountains were hidden in dense clouds, that swept over and enveloped us in a cold vapour. One night black clouds hid out the sky and hung like funereal palls over the valley, burying our camp in an Egyptian darkness. For an hour every breath of wind or current of air was stilled, and the atmosphere became so oppressive that we almost felt a difficulty in breathing. A tongue of fire darted into the valley, and a boom like the cannonade of great guns reverberated from peak to peak. The storm covering us let loose its

flood. Dry rivulets became foaming torrents. Precipices were transformed into cascades of roaring waters, and were it not that we were on the summit of a ridge, our whole camp would have been whirled and rolled among the *débris* of huge trees and rocks carried down in the swirling flood. A thousand feet above, in a deep fissure in the precipice, was a gnarled tree, rearing its herculean form far into space. Again the blackness around was torn and rent by a quivering flash of lightning, followed instantaneously by a deafening roll of artillery, accompanied by the crushing and crunching of great masses of timber and rock flung headlong down the mountain, that filled the whole valley with a so demoniacal and overpowering din that the gully seemed to be an Inferno itself with all the devils at home. Under the roofs of our camp were the only dry spots in a world of seething waters. From underneath every stone and rock around us came serpents, scorpions, and rats, seeking a shelter from the fury of the elements. Every one rushed out into the open, taking special care not to trample on late arrivals, and tents and houses were given up to our self-invited guests. At last, shivering with the cold rain, drenched to

the skin, and exasperated at the audacity of our visitors, a raid was made, in which many an unsuspecting and confiding puff-adder and scorpion met an untimely end, their dead bodies being thrown outside in the wet, furnishing a terrible warning to them against a too implicit confidence in the hospitality of humanity.

On November 7, Mr Hanner and Muhammed, with the remainder of our *impedimenta*, arrived in camp. A week afterwards a number of natives from the Makanga chief came with three tusks of ivory in return for my present, accompanied by the *Mwana Mambo*, or Prime Minister. He was sent to inquire who I was, and my object in coming to the country, and said that the chief, hearing I was an Englishman, expressed his willingness to carry on friendly negotiations with me, and desired that my head-man should return with his minister. It was a great relief to me to hear that my negotiations with the Makanga chief were so satisfactory; since, as every white man in the country before had been massacred, and European troops defeated, I naturally awaited with considerable trepidation the reception I should receive from the chief. Muhammed, my facto-

tum, left the next day with the Prime Minister, accompanied by natives carrying a large present to further our negotiations.

In a few days our house was finished, and the camp removed, our merchandise being placed in safe quarters out of the rain.

A fortnight later messengers came back from the Makanga chief, accompanied by Nfuka, his brother and heir, with a present. A letter I received in Arabic from Muhammed acquainted me with his experience of the chief, and that he had been requested to remain until my arrival, and asked me to return with Nfuka. After two or three days' preparation for my journey, I started off with an Arab detachment, leaving Mr Hanner in charge of the house we had built, with a small force of Arabs.

I was rather dubious of the reception I should receive, but circumstances necessarily obliged me to go onward. On the fifth day we arrived at Kasaiira village, on a tributary of the Revugwe, where we halted, and messengers were sent on to the chief at the town of Kamsiki, five miles distant, to acquaint him with our approach. After we had finished breakfast, messengers arrived from the capital, accompanied





MR HANNER.

MUHAMMED.

A COMPANY OF ARAB SOLDIERS.





by the royal band, and we continued our march, enlivened by the strains and tootlings of fifes, drums, and several native instruments, followed by a crowd of natives who lined the roadway. Half a mile from Kamsiki we halted on the top of a ridge overlooking the town. From here a wide road led into the citadel. Messengers were again sent forward to note our arrival. My Arabs gave a salute of two hundred rounds, which was followed by a din of musketry from the village below. On hearing the return salute, we advanced along the highway. As soon as we were in sight of the stockade, a great crowd of natives poured out, amongst which we could discern the chief himself, surrounded by his princes. I left my *machilla*, and advanced on foot, surrounded by Arabs with loaded rifles. Twenty yards from the walls of the town the chief and myself met. Around were thousands of natives, behind me my own people and Arabs. Chikukula took my hand, and without a word led me into the town through the gateway amid a blaze of musketry on every side, the banging of drums, tootling of flutes, and shouts and cries from a thousand throats.

I was conducted in this way among the tor-

tuous streets, until we arrived at an enclosure in which were several houses. These, I was informed, were presented to me by the king for myself and people. The remainder of the afternoon was passed in amusements of various kinds, accompanied by the state bands. A number of dancing-girls disported before us. Strong men, jugglers, and other artistes filled up the time with their entertainments until sundown, when the chief and his court retired, followed by the population, who had crowded around, and we were left to recuperate ourselves after the fatigue of our journey.

I remained at Kamsiki for two months, during which time we erected a large house, and commenced plantation-work. Muhammed departed for Undi, in response to an invitation from that chief. On February 7, I myself left for Blantyre, where I arrived on the 3d of March.

## CHAPTER IX.

## MOMBASA.

ITS HISTORY—PORTUGUESE CRUELTY—DESCRIPTION—MY OBJECT IN VISITING THE TOWN—ARAB COSTUME AND MANNERS—SOCIETY—RELIGIOUS RITES—THE SWAHILI—DETERIORATION OF ARABS—AN ARAB DINNER—VISIT TO SWAHILI QUARTER—ARAB WOMEN—POSITION OF ARABS IN AFRICA—FUTILITY OF PRESENT METHODS FOR ABOLISHING THE SLAVE-TRADE—MR GEORGE MACKENZIE'S POLICY—A TESTIMONIAL OF GOODWILL.

THE town of Mombasa is built on an island three miles in length and one and a half in breadth, and is aptly compared by Owen to a “huge castle encircled by a moat.” It possesses, perhaps, one of the most remarkable histories of any town on the east African coast. Its inhabitants have always been notorious for the display of an unflagging patriotism, and the valorous deeds of its long roll of heroes—such as 'Ahmed-bin-Muhammed, 'Abdu'-llah-bin-'Ahmed,

and Mubarak—still form the theme of the most popular ballads and songs. The local name for this town is Mvita, meaning “war” or “battle.” Sheykh Batūta mentions it in 1331 as a large place abounding in fruits, and inhabited by a chaste and religious people. Camoens mentions it two hundred years later, as translated by Burton :—

“The isle before them stood so near the land,  
That narrow was the strait which lay between.  
A city situate upon the strand,  
Was on the seaboard frontage to be seen,  
With noble edifices fairly planned,  
As from the offing showed afar the scene.  
Ruled by a king for years full many famed,  
The isle and city were Mombasah named.”<sup>1</sup>

From the time of the occupation of this island town by the Portuguese under Vasco da Gama, its history is a reiteration of cruelties perpetrated by the invaders, and massacres and reprisals on the part of the inhabitants. It unfortunately

<sup>1</sup> “Estava a Ilha á terra taõ chegada,  
Que um estreito pequeno a dividia ;  
Uma cidade nella situada,  
Que na frente do mar apparecia ;  
De nobres edificios fabricada,  
Como por fora ao longe descobria  
Regida por um Rei de antiga idade  
Mombaça éo nome da Ilha e da cidade.”

became acquainted with Europeans at a time when, as Burton so lucidly puts it, "the Portuguese were slavers and robbers in the Lord's name, the Dutch were second-rate traders, and the English rank salt-water thieves."

In 1505 Francisco Almeida, the first Viceroy of Portuguese India, captured and burnt the town, and three years afterwards D. Duarte de Lemos was installed as governor, the native sultan continuing to reign as a vassal of the Portuguese. From this time till 1529 was a ceaseless continuance of hostilities between the citizens and Portuguese, when, under D. Nuno, the place was again burnt to the ground. In 1586 overtures were made to place it under the suzerainty of the Turks, whereupon it was again attacked by Martin Affonzo de Melo Bombeiro, when Mombasa was burnt for the third time.

In 1594 a large fort was built, and Portuguese jurisdiction was re-established two years after under D. Francisco da Gama. Yusef-bin-Ahmed, a few years later, entered the fort by stratagem, massacred the Portuguese officials, and held the town for some three months, when, being attacked by a Portuguese fleet, he burnt the city

and fled to Arabia. The fort was repaired in 1635, and again occupied by the Portuguese.

Sultān-bin-Seyyif, one of the 'Imāms of 'Um-mān, besieged Mombasa about 1660, and, after a struggle of five years, captured the fort. His son, Seyyif-bin-Sultān, with the assistance of the Mazr'ūyy tribe, succeeded on the ninth of Jemādh-'el-'ekhra, A.H. 1100 (December 14, 1698), in finally defeating and expelling the Portuguese, and placing an Arab governor over the town. This was the turning-point in the history of this unfortunate city. Since then for many years it carried on a succession of petty quarrels with the Sultan of Zanzibar, while now it merely forms the headquarters of the British East Africa Company.

In 1889 I was on my way home *viâ* Zanzibar, and not being in any particular hurry, I made up my mind to visit the town of Mombasa, and study personally a people who had so interesting and famous a past.

Mombasa possesses two good harbours,—one, called Fort Mombasa, near the town, and the other, much more spacious and superior, called Kilindini, to the west. On the shores of this harbour will doubtless arise a new town, the

headquarters of the East Africa Company. Fort Mombasa is entered by a narrow winding channel between two coral-reefs, and within a stone's throw of the high bank. It was on one of these reefs that Vasco da Gama narrowly escaped shipwreck from the treachery of his native pilots, who as soon as the ship was aground jumped overboard and swam to the shore. The details of this manœuvre were forced from some unfortunates on board by what was called the molten-lead process, this being poured on their flesh until they either told the truth or made up some plausible story.

The chroniclers relate many incidents attending the dealings of Vasco da Gama and his people with the natives of Mombasa. Even in those days visitors appeared to possess a mania for curio-hunting as insatiable as that of the ordinary nineteenth-century globe-trotter. Maidens and children coming on board the ships wearing bracelets and rings did well if they made sure that these ornaments fitted loosely, since if one of the gallant mariners had any difficulty in releasing them from the fair maiden's wrist, he expedited matters with a chopper, taking the hand and arm with the bracelet, to enable him

to remove it at leisure. To satisfy this desire of becoming acquainted with specimens of native handicraft, many women and children were mutilated, and their bodies thrown overboard to the sharks. The memory of these incidents has not yet died out amongst the people, with whom the name of a European or Christian is even now tinged with odium.

As the vessel glides through the narrow channel at the entrance, it almost seems to touch the overhanging boughs of the island. Round a bend to the left we are in the harbour and underneath the town. On the right are brown cliffs decked with luxuriant festoons of creepers and garlands of flowers. Along the top are groves of oranges, cloves, and bananas, fringed with the graceful outlines of cocoanut-palms. In front is Kisaoni or Frère Town, the mission settlement, where the white mansions of the missionaries stand out conspicuously amidst the luxuriant wildness of the tropical vegetation. On our left is the island of Mombasa, the weather-beaten moss-covered turrets of the old Portuguese fort, a mass of white square-built houses inhabited by the Arabs, and farther on the grass-roofed huts of the Swahili.



Mombasa harbour is certainly one of the most beautiful and picturesque spots on the African coast. It is, in fact, an elysium for a lover of nature. From an artistic point of view there are four Mombasas. When the rising sun glints on the grey buttresses of the fort, it lights up the roofs of the houses, brings out the vivid green of the topmost palms, and shows up the golden yellow of the mangoes and oranges, infusing a delightful warmth into the cool morning air. There is Mombasa at mid-day, a furnace blazing overhead, and illuminating every minutiae in the landscape with a dazzling and blinding brilliancy. There is Mombasa at night under the softening light of the moon, changing the emerald water into a lake of quivering silver, casting deep and mysterious shadows of the palms and mimosa on the surrounding jungle, and transforming the city into a cyclopean burial-place. There is Mombasa in a storm, black and deathlike, torn and rent by blinding flashes of lightning that momentarily impress on the eye a vivid picture of the landscape,—an image which remains indelibly impressed on the mind long after the whole of nature is hidden again in a Stygian darkness.

This is Mombasa, the scene of a thousand battles, a city whose very name is war, a place whose people have struggled for four centuries for their independence and liberty, whose walls are riddled with artillery and musketry, whose very soil is steeped in the blood of patriots, and which has only at last succumbed to the invasion of British company promoters.

I landed in Mombasa in March 1889, to study *in situ* the posterity of a people so renowned in African history. I was very hospitably received by Mr Buchanan, a gentleman well known on the coast, and at that time representing the interests of the British East Africa Company. I explained to him that my object in visiting the town was to acquire a personal insight of the inner life and ideas of the local people, and received his most cordial offers of assistance in my quest. After remaining Mr Buchanan's guest for two or three days, I succeeded in renting one of the most commodious houses in the Arab quarter, owned by an Indian merchant.

There were scarcely half-a-dozen European residents in the town representing the company, and I soon found that the unfriendly attitude of the natives, especially the Swahili,



THE MAZR'ÜYY WELL, MOMBASA.



towards the foreigners would effectually prevent my getting *en rapport* with them as a European. I had with me a full wardrobe of Arab clothing, purchased in Zanzibar, and I determined to use these in carrying out my object. My friend the Indian merchant supplied me with the necessary furniture, and in two days my household arrangements were completed.

The dīwān was a long narrow room lighted by two windows. At the upper end were Kurdish carpets over a large mat. A number of cushions covered with brilliantly coloured satin were placed against the walls in luxuriant profusion. A border encircled the room, on which were inscribed in flowing Arabic caligraphy verses from 'el Qur'an. In the centre of the dīwān stood a large *nārjēla*, or water-pipe, three feet in height, around the base of which were coiled long red tubes that would reach to every corner of the dīwān.

My costume consisted of an under-garment of linen edged with a border of coloured silk. Over this a brown camel's hair or a long spotless white linen garment reached to the feet. Then came a small waistcoat, richly embroidered with silver, and a flowing surtout of camel's hair edged with

gold braid, or broad cloth embroidered with silver. The head-gear was a white skull-cap entwined by a voluminous turban of many-coloured silks. A belt of gold-worked braid around the waist supported in front a richly carved silver knife. From the left shoulder hung a long keen double-edged sword in a silver-worked sheath. The feet were encased in sandals of coloured leathers.

Through the kindness of my Indian friend I obtained introductions to one or two of the leading Arabs, and explained to them what I wished to do, informing them at the same time that though I had donned the native costume, and intended to follow closely their rules of etiquette and living, it was not to be inferred that I had become a proselyte to the 'Islāmic faith. I was agreeably impressed by the intelligent manner in which my explanations were received, and was promised every assistance on their part to further my wish to obtain a better knowledge of the people, and to facilitate a *rapprochement* between the two, an innovation that would be mutually advantageous. I asked them to keep my nationality a secret, and to represent me to other visitors as a Turk from Constantinople. To this they agreed, and having satisfactorily settled this

matter, in a few days I found my dīwān crowded with all the Arabs of any repute or influence in the town.

Society in this place may be roughly divided into three classes. The people are not affected or influenced in any way by relative wealth, the claims of family and blood being only recognised. In the etiquette of the dīwān I found most curious and delicate problems of this nature. Amongst my visitors I have received at the same time Arabs, the one clothed in most exquisite raiment and possessing a large rent-roll, another in the plainest of garbs and living on public charity, but holding a position and influence above the wealthiest inhabitant in the town. A number of wealthy Arabs seated around the dīwān have, on the arrival of such a person, risen at once to their feet, made a profound obeisance, and escorted the poor but noble personage to the place of honour on the right hand of the host.

There is perhaps little that delights an Arab more than recounting the antiquity of his lineage, and many of them are able to trace their descent in an unbroken line to an age when Britons were clothed in skins. A person who can trace his

descent from the family of Muhammed has the hereditary title of sherīf, which transcends all others, and confers on him a nominal social precedence over his fellows.

Locally there are a number of families descendent from the Arabs from Muskat, who more than a thousand years ago settled here and made it their stronghold. The chief amongst these are the Mazr'ūyy, previously mentioned. These, with a dozen others of less note, form the upper class. Below these are the descendants of slaves who have embraced the 'Islāmic faith and become freed men, generally known as Swahili. Still lower are the present slaves, who occupy the position of labourers and servants.

The reputation once held by these people for a devoutness and rigid observance of the doctrines of their faith to a fanatic degree is rapidly becoming lost, and, except amongst a very few, nothing remains of their religion save the bare ritual; and even in the observance of their ceremonies they evince evident signs of a fast-growing scepticism and indifference, which is mainly attributable to the ofttimes not salutary influence of admixture with lower-class whites; and were it not for the power still lingering of the



local Mrs Grundy, most of the mosques would be closed, and religion of any kind disappear.

The Beloochees, who have been employed for very many years as mercenary troops, are credited with having introduced a number of ceremonies whose observance was taken up with the utmost fervour and superstitiousness by the middle-class Swahili, and even to some extent by some of the higher class Arabs; and it is only within the past few years, when these rites had attained to such an extraordinary degree and excited so much fanaticism, that they were suppressed by one of the leading Arabs, 'Aly-bin-'Abdu'llah, though even to the present day they are continued in a milder form by the Swahili.

The performance of these rites mostly takes place on the feast-day celebrating the birth of Muhammed, and a visitor at that period can witness a procession of Beloochees and a rabble of street urchins parading the town with the ordinary chants and dances universally practised on the occasion, on their way to the outskirts, where the crowds are assembled. Should a private individual wish to become conciliatory from a pious point of view, he may institute an entertainment of this nature. It is generally con-

sidered a praiseworthy action, though amongst a good many of the Arabs it is looked upon more in the light of a social entertainment than anything connected with serious devotion. At these entertainments all the rooms in the house are given up to the visitors. Every one is self-invited, and refreshments and coffee are prepared for all comers. The building and neighbouring thoroughfare are ablaze with lamps. Aloe-wood and other perfumes make the surrounding atmosphere redolent of their pungent aroma. The principal and largest chamber is lined on either side by the intimate friends of the host. In a neighbouring antechamber a number of people are squatted, reciting rapidly 'el Qur'an with a musical intonation. In the centre of the room are a number of figures inebriated with fanaticism, a close atmosphere, and the fumes of aloe-wood and coffee. Drawing their dangerous-looking swords and keen curved knives, they flourish them with such blind frenzy and apparent unconsciousness of the vicinity of their neighbours, that the greatest miracle is that, in place of ugly gashes, any survive from such an exhibition of devotional mania. Plunging these knives into their mouths, running huge nails through their

cheeks and tongues, and meanwhile screaming over prayers to the saint 'el Qādir, they make up a picture that cannot be witnessed even on the other side of Bedlam.

Sixty years ago it was currently reported that a sheykh, a holy and devout man, to prove his immunity from physical conditions while doing homage to this particular saint, called to two of the onlookers to hold his naked sword—one the hilt and the other at the point. Rolling up his garment, he placed his abdomen on the keen edge, and drawing himself from side to side succeeded in severing his body, which rolled divided on the floor. The onlookers, aghast at this horrible spectacle, and believing him to be dead, burst out into their characteristic lamentations and cries. Taking the disjointed body, however, the portions were put together by two of the most pious of the spectators, and, producing a copy of 'el Qur'an, one read with the utmost speed and fervour, while the other passed his hand, after the manner of modern hypnotists, over the ghastly wound, and the weeping crowd around were soon rejoiced to see the holy man stick together, open his eyes, and rise up as well as ever, except for the scar, which he ex-

hibited with great gusto until the day of his death, many years afterwards. No better proof could be given of the gross ignorance and superstition of the Swahili than that such a tradition could find a congenial soil for its implicit belief.

Amongst the many unfortunates influenced by this story was a man who came to me begging for alms. Excited by fanatic frenzy, he drew his curved knife, put out his tongue and severed it, his equally ignorant friends praying by his side. Following the illustrious example of the holy sheykh alluded to, he placed the tip of his tongue to the root from which it was severed; but despite the most frantic prayers and efforts of the bystanders, it failed to adhere, and the wretched man had perforce to accept the failure as a proof that he was unfitted for the ceremony by some moral deficiency which had annulled the protection of the saint appealed to.

I have witnessed myself many Swahili who have tortured themselves under similar fanatic conditions, and in many cases marvellous instances are given of what is supposed to be a modern innovation—that of the efficacy of faith-cure.

The Arab, however, is quite contented to rele-

gate these exhibitions to the unfortunate Swahili, and looks upon them as a species of amusement, being very careful never to experiment on himself. It is greatly to the praise of the sheykh 'Aly-bin-'Abdu'llah that these barbarous exhibitions on the part of the ignorant and superstitious Swahili have been discountenanced.

Judging from what the past history of these people has been, and how at one time they reached a by no means insignificant degree of civilisation and culture, it is very obvious to a casual observer that the present stage of their history is one of rapid but unmistakable degradation, a fact which is deplored by none more than themselves. This national decadence can be traced as the result of various causes. The first perhaps, and most important, are the climatic conditions, and the resultant admixture with the lower-typed peoples surrounding them.

The old families, by constant intermarriage with the negro races on the coast and inhabitants of the interior, have tended in many cases to appreciably lose their characteristics, and have fallen to a state hardly superior to the savages amongst whom they first came as a civilised and dominant race. The result of this intermixture

for the past five centuries is a race of negroes imbued more or less with Arab blood, but in whom the lower negro characteristics are more especially predominant.

Another cause, and by no means the least, must certainly be ascribed to the inertness and indolence consequent on the possession of so many slaves. These people, for the most part impregnated with slave-blood, have inherited in a very high degree the supineness of their slavish progenitors, and are wholly oblivious of the fact that the labour of their slaves, and capital expended on their purchase and maintenance, can only be profitably utilised by a concurrent energy and skilled supervision on their own part.

Like other peoples who have deteriorated from similar causes, they are content to live exclusively on the empty phantom of a past glorious history, long since defunct. Under the delusion that they are entitled to partake in the honour of those of whom they are indeed a bastard and almost alien race, they evince a pride and national self-conceit that wholly blinds them to their existent degradation. Pauperised by idleness, they are content to pass their existence in a squalor unknown to their ancestors, forgetful of their dignity and ad-

vancement in their fatuous dreams of an ideal long since departed, and of which they have shown themselves such unworthy representatives.

The Indian, who at one time was unable to compete with the Arab in commercial acumen, and held among them a despised position, offers sufficient proof of the decay of these people, since he has acquired a position and power impossible for him in the past.

As traders, the Mombasa Arabs have almost entirely lost their old precedence, and have devolved into mere agents of the Indians and Europeans, retaining with a ludicrous pertinacity the contempt of their ancestors for these people. Living as they do in an atmosphere imbued with such chimerical pretensions to superiority, it is not to be wondered at that deceit and a total absence of veracity are unfortunately universally prevalent. Under the erroneous impression that the acuteness and *savoir faire* of their ancestors are still possessed by them, they have perforce to substitute as a semblance the baser qualities of dishonesty and petty stratagem, of whose immoral aspects they are quite oblivious.

Conceiving, in conformity with all other ignorant peoples, that labour of any kind is unworthy

of their delusive pretensions, they are content to place the whole of their affairs and properties absolutely in the hands of slaves and servants more ignorant even than themselves. As a natural sequence, they have become involved in the utmost confusion and concurrent loss. Under such disastrous conditions, the properties and wealth inherited from their forefathers have rapidly deteriorated and the owners become pauperised. Deeply involved in debt, their estates have been heavily mortgaged to the more energetic Indian, and latterly to the British East Africa Company, who will doubtless thus acquire proprietary rights over nearly all the lands held for centuries by Arabs.

The Mombasa Arab is not deficient in personal courage, though he is very partial to exhibiting an inclination for bravado and braggadocio which are purely superficial. His ethics and moral code are theoretically of a high order, but in practice their fulfilment is conspicuous by its absence. They are outwardly devout and religious, of which fear of public opinion appears to be the most potent incentive. They are kind to their servants and slaves, whose lives are passed as indolently as their masters'. Their wives are



generally happy and contented, and occupy a higher social position than is customary in other parts of the continent. Sexual morality must be judged in relation to that of 'Islāmic code, and even in this relation is not a high one, though, as elsewhere, the class of fallen women only became an institution on the advent of Europeans.

One evening in the month of Ramadhan, after the *mu'edhin* on a neighbouring mosque had called the faithful to evening prayer, I accompanied an Arab friend to dine with him at his own house. We wended our way among narrow streets, lined on either side by high whitewashed buildings. From the open doors of the mosques issued a monotonous intonation as the crowd of worshippers within repeated their prayers under the direction of the *mu'allim* or reader. Now and then we encountered a group of richly clothed Arabs returning to their homes. They greeted us with "'*Ellāh yemasikum b'ilkheyr*" ("Good evening to you"); to which we would reply, "'*Elhamd lillāh*" ("Thank you"), "*kayf hāl-kum?*" ("how are you?"). They returned, "'*Elhamd lillāh*," and passed on. In some of the shops, sitting on a mat spread over the *mastaba*,

or stone bench outside the house, were often Arab merchants who had just finished their prayers, and were chewing betel-nut, which they kept in a small silver case not unlike a snuff-box. As we passed them they invariably invited us to sit down, exclaiming, "*Qarib*" ("Come in"); to which we replied with the ordinary formula, "'*El-hamd lillāh*."

A number of narrow turnings brought us to the Arab's house. A large courtyard was filled with goats and sheep, The former were being milked by native slave boys, who had just returned from herding the animals outside the town. Picking our way amongst these, we reached a great door, richly carved and ornamented. Inside we entered a spacious hall, and mounted a narrow stone staircase, which brought us to the third storey. The walls were bare, and some three feet in thickness. The whole place looked as if it sadly wanted a little whitewash. My host led me into a large room overlooking the town. A curtain was fixed at one end, behind which, in all probability, the host's women-folk could, if curiosity prompted them, see the guest of their husband and hear the conversation without being visible themselves. After our ab-

lutions and evening prayer had been performed in the orthodox manner, and refusing the offer of my friend to chew a betel-nut and lime, dinner was brought in by a female slave. She carried on her head a large bronze tray containing five or six different dishes. A boy entered with a vessel containing water and a towel to wash our hands. The dishes comprised rice and curries, both of fish and fowl, some camel's flesh roasted on skewers, and *pilau*. Two or three kinds of cake and bread, one fried in oil and sugar. Sherbets of different colours completed the meal.

Two of the children of the host sat down with us, a boy and a girl. The tray was placed on the carpet, and we sat around it on the floor, eating with our right hand. After dinner a servant brought in *café noire*, served up very hot in tiny cups without sugar or milk. It was the correct thing to take at least three of these cups. My host finished up with some betel-nut, and I took a few whiffs of a *nārjēla*.

We went up to the roof, and had a few minutes' conversation. Around us were the flat white roofs of the town, on which we could discern, in the light of the stars, other Arabs passing their time after dinner in conversation, some with their

wives reclining on mats. To seaward we could hear the roar of the breakers on the reefs, and in front were the masts of a fleet of dhows, anchored in the unruffled waters of the harbour. On our left we could hear a distant hum of people, rising from the crowded Swahili quarter amongst a dense mass of grass-roofed wattle houses.

The Swahili at that time gave many signs of their ill-feeling towards the Europeans, and it was considered highly imprudent and dangerous for the English to venture out after nightfall. On several occasions, indeed, they were stoned in passing through the streets in daylight.

After a quarter of an hour's chat, a brother of my host arrived, and we left the house for the Swahili quarter. The Arab part of the town was now quiet and deathlike, except where here and there we came across the house of a sheykh whose lower rooms were ablaze with light and doors crowded with visitors. We went into one or two of these, the crowd making way for us. We shook hands with the sheykh, took some coffee, passed a few commonplace remarks, and left.

The Swahili town has many characteristics of a negro village. The streets are tortuous lanes, the houses built without any system or method.

The thatched roofs overhanging the dark passages between the houses made progression a matter of considerable difficulty at night-time. Passing through the bazaar, where a great number of the smaller shops were still open, we heard a din of shouting and crying approaching in our direction. In a few seconds the whole of the main street was filled with a seething mass of young men and boys armed with sticks. We drew on one side into the door of a shop, and the crowd swayed past us, fighting and brandishing their weapons over each other's heads, yelling and shrieking at the top of their voices. I was told this was one of the evening amusements of the town; and it certainly showed that the fighting spirit of these people was not yet quite extinguished.

The mother of one of the Arabs had lately died, and we called upon him. The house was filled with women, friends of the deceased. It is the custom on the death of a woman of note for the friends to mourn for her in the house for several days, remaining there night and day, paying occasional visits to the grave. Some of the women possessed considerable claims to beauty; all were unveiled, and I had a good opportunity of studying their features. Two or three were

quite white, and probably of pure Arab nationality; the majority, however, were of a darkish complexion, going down through all shades of colour to the pure negress.

After paying a number of other ceremonial visits, we returned home.

The Arab is purely a trader, and his transactions are for the most part entirely conformable to the native ethics of commerce, and though it is always highly to be deplored that slavery enters into them, it must be borne in mind that the inhumanity of this traffic has rarely as its concomitants the atrocious brutality that stigmatises it under the hands of the Swahili and coast tribes.

No real progress is possible under existent conditions in tropical Africa until the true position of the Arab is recognised and treated in a rational and practical spirit; and the present spasmodic and immature policy of treating the Arab as a common foe deserving of no quarter, will necessarily tend to materially restrict the development and civilisation of the interior of this continent. The Arab must be considered as a potent and long-established factor in our commercial and political dealings in these vast

regions. It is a source of deep regret that missionaries, and well-meaning though for the most part misinformed travellers, should expend their energies in fostering unnecessary and mutually harmful animosity between the Arab and European.

It cannot be too urgently impressed upon arm-chair philanthropists how erroneous is a policy of promoting abortive and useless schemes for the suppression of slavery with the rifle—a course which invariably tends to appreciably increase the misery and wretchedness of the victims of this traffic, as well as, by its universal failure, diminishing the power and influence that could otherwise be exerted by the inherent prestige of civilisation. The attempts that are being made to coerce the Arab by the various anti-slavery societies and others furnish abundant demonstration, by their humiliating and disastrous results, of the utter futility of this misguided policy.

The Arab, for centuries the only representative in Africa of outside civilisation, has acquired a prestige so powerful and real that he is able with the greatest facility to resist any isolated antagonism by force to his commercial supremacy,

and the only efficient policy that guarantees success is purely and simply one of diplomacy.

The Arab as an enemy can and does effectually prevent our power of civilisation in Africa. As a friend and ally he could without difficulty be made a most powerful and effective instrument, paradoxical as it may seem, in the advancement of philanthropy and opening up of the continent, and it is only justice to him to correct the erroneous popular impression that has laid to his charge the odium which properly belongs to an essentially African race. The barbarities perpetrated by inhuman slave-dealers in the vast majority of instances are neither instigated nor encouraged by the Arab.

In my daily conversations with the Arabs, carried on under conditions untrammelled by any of the disadvantages necessarily existent in the ordinary intercourse between our two nationalities, I acquired much and interesting information respecting the relations of the Arabs and Europeans in this town. There was a unanimous expression of satisfaction at the policy pursued by Mr George Mackenzie with regard to the absorbing and burning question of the freedom of their slaves. Nothing can, indeed, fur-



nish more conclusive proof of the wisdom of treating with these people in a rational manner, with regard to the suppression of this traffic, than the attitude of the slave-owners, when the question of treating with them is conducted on lines similar to those employed by Mr Mackenzie, who has evinced in his management of this delicate question a rare and happy aptitude.

Guided by such men as Mr Mackenzie, the East Africa Company will become a most potent and real power in treating with the great question of African slavery ; and it is of the greatest importance that the innovatory policy of treating rationally and friendly with Arabs should be continued on a more universal scale. Until this is thoroughly appreciated and acquiesced in, the slave question must ever remain *in statu quo*.

Armed parties, representing anti-slavery and other philanthropic societies at home, whatever may be their moral status on this side, are considered locally by slave and free as raiders and freebooters, and are treated as inimical to their most ancient traditions ; while much harm is done by the universal failure and consequent ignominy of their attempt to solve so large

and grave a question by means so ludicrously inadequate.

Several days before my departure, I was astonished to receive a deputation of Arabs, who stated that it was the unanimous wish of all the influential men of their race in the town that I should accept a position in the interest of the Company to deal between the Company and the Arabs, since, by my knowledge of their language and characteristics, I should, in their opinion, be eminently qualified to conduct the relations on terms mutually advantageous and satisfactory. To express their desire to the directors, they handed me a letter signed by all the Arabs of any repute or standing in the place. This I wished them to forward themselves, but by their earnest entreaty I consented to deliver it personally, which I did on my return to England. This testimonial of goodwill borne to me by these people was wholly unsolicited on my part, and indeed had it been so, would most certainly have been unsuccessful. It unfortunately, however, proved the innocent cause of a misunderstanding on the part of the directors which I, as well as the Arabs concerned, can only deeply deplore.

## CHAPTER X.

## BOAT-CRUIISING ON THE EAST AFRICAN COAST.

MOZAMBIQUE—SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS—FEVER—CORAL-REEFS  
 —THE HEAT OF THE SUN—AN UNPLEASANT TRIP—A DANGER-  
 OUS BAR—IN THE RIVER—REST AFTER TOIL—AN OPTICAL  
 ILLUSION—A PHANTOM BOAT—METHOD OF LANDING—BOAT  
 BURIED IN THE SAND—NATIVES EXCAVATING—RETURN TO  
 MOZAMBIQUE.

WHILE resident for several years at Mozambique it was my custom, as much for health as to obtain some relief from the monotony of the place, to make voyages in and out the creeks of this little-known coast. My boat was fifty feet long, built of very heavy wood, with two thick masts carrying large lateen sails. Two men and a boy comprised the crew.

Mozambique is a coral island, about a mile in length by some four or five hundred yards in width. It is densely overcrowded by a popula-

tion of Portuguese,—chiefly officials and convicts,—of Indians, Swahili, and negroes. The sewage of this town is thrown indiscriminately on the beach. As much as happens to be below high-water mark is carried out and deposited on the coral-flats surrounding the island. At low water these flats are dry for a mile and more, and the sewage is left to ferment and exhale its fetid effluvia under the fierce tropical sun. With an atmosphere so terribly vitiated, it is not remarkable that this place should have been named the white man's tomb, or that such fearful diseases as the *febre perniosa* should find here a congenial home. Malarial fevers of the worst type are here the ordinary incidents of everyday life. The white inhabitants are for the most part emaciated and fever-stricken, and have the appearance of being on the very verge of the grave, which indeed in many cases is only too near the truth.

Notwithstanding its unsavoury surroundings, Mozambique is by no means unpicturesque. Sailing over in a boat from the mainland about ten o'clock in the morning, one sees it at its best. At this hour the land-breeze has died away, and for half an hour or more there reigns a breathless

calm. The water is like a floor of polished agate. On the great coral-banks it is a light-coloured green, deepening off into richer shades with the increasing depth, till near the horizon it has become a brilliant ultramarine, flecked here and there with white creamy breakers.

Dotted over the harbour are winged lateen-rigged boats on which depends the market-supply of the town. Some, impelled by crude oars, are slowly and laboriously working southwards in readiness to catch the first breath of the expected monsoon. All are filled with men and women laden with baskets of garden produce, fish, and other provisions. Here and there is a solitary chocolate-hued fisherman seated in a sewn-bark canoe watching the cocoa-nut floats around him, and ready to paddle up on the first intimation of a bite.

The town lies in front to seaward, the great brown fort on the left, and the blue, pink, yellow, and glaring colour-washed square-roofed houses to the right. The island is so low that at this distance it is not visible. The town appears to be floating on the coloured water. Sprinkle a few palms among this mass of floating buildings, place above all an intensely azure sky, and a

dazzling, blinding light everywhere, and you behold Mozambique.

The coast-line is, as a rule, made up of thickly wooded rolling country. Between Chilwan and Quillimane it is very low and flat, so that it cannot be distinguished at a distance of ten miles out to sea. Near the Lurio river, north of Mozambique, it is mountainous, and covered with bare sun-burnt masses of granitic rocks.

Between Mozambique and Nakala harbour the shore is lined with a low continuous wall of coral, in which the sea has bored a vast number of tunnels and gullies. At high tide the water forces itself into these cavities, and is shot some thirty feet into the air with a loud report. I was one moonlight night passing along this part of the coast in a sailing-boat. For the whole night we seemed to be running the gauntlet of an interminable line of fortresses. Boom after boom resounded over the waves all up and down the coast-line, each report being followed by a column of white spray that in the moonbeams was undistinguishable from the smoke of a great gun.

For two or three miles from the shore is a large coral-bank, partly dry at low water. It is en-

closed to seaward by a line of breakers. We were obliged to pole across this flat, and fortunately succeeded in getting over and past the breakers before the receding tide left us high and dry, when we should have had to wait several hours for the next flood. We passed over a coral-reef in some five or six feet of clear water, that enabled us to see with the greatest distinctness the myriads of anemones, sponges, and coral, among which flitted fishes of the most fantastic form, the sunlight flashing from their scales through the interstices of the submarine forest.

To seaward stretched the breakers, dashing with a ceaseless roar on the outlying ledge of the reef. We crept cautiously along until we arrived at a small opening not ten yards in width, where there was no surf. We hauled our sheets taut, and brought the boat's head as near up to the wind as she would go. We rushed over the intervening space and brushed the cataract-like wall to leeward, and were at once in the blue water of the Mokamba Bay, with no bottom at two hundred fathoms.

The reef here went down like a precipice. Out in the bay we rolled in the heavy swell from the sea and made little headway. The

wind came in fitful breaths. The sun beat fiercely down hotter and hotter, till at noon we seemed to be in the centre of a great furnace. The sky and sea, of a deep blue, dazzling with a blinding light, seemed but part of the great ball of fire flaring overhead. The iron-work of the boat was too hot to touch without scorching the skin. The paint on the deck and gunwales was covered with great blisters. The crew lay about under every procurable shelter. The hand I used to hold the tiller swelled to twice its size, and had the appearance and sensation of being held too near a blazing fire. To have taken off my helmet for a few minutes would have meant certain death from heat apoplexy; and even after incessantly drenching my head in salt water, it burned and throbbed from the torrid fierceness of the globe of flames overhead.

A short time before I was in the same boat with Consul O'Neill. We left the mainland for Mozambique, a voyage we often made, and which, with a favourable breeze, would have taken two hours. On this occasion, however, there was not a breath of wind, as it was the time of the breaking-up of the monsoon. For nearly two days and



a night we drifted helplessly in and out of Conducia Bay, a mile from the shore, subject to the most intense heat the sun could pour down on us, without a covering of any kind, and one small tin of preserved carrots and a cocoa-nut to quench the raging thirst of ten people. In such a situation one realises what a tropical sun is.

By three o'clock the wind freshened, and we had at least the satisfaction of motion. The sun was down before we got near the land, and it was pitchy dark when we came within hearing of the dull heavy thud of the surf on the beach. The shore we were nearing was unsurveyed, and for the most part unknown. We were, however, obliged to bear down to it to land, for we had no means of lighting a fire on board, and the great depth close up to the beach gave us no opportunity of anchoring for the night. There was a small river here—the Bajone—and to this we altered our course to endeavour to effect an entry, though we had good reason to fear the bar running across its mouth would shut us out. To land on the beach was too dangerous to be attempted with our short-handed crew, and should we not be able to enter the river, our prospects of dinner and sleep were very remote

indeed, as we should be obliged to be beating about off-shore all night, till morning showed us the nature of the coast. Soon the deafening roar of the breakers on the bar warned us that we had come as far as was safe. We were already in the deep short swell that lay in close proximity to the broken surf. The sheets were hauled taut and the helm put down. We came up to the wind on the port-tack, and coasted outside the white foaming line that could just be seen through the dense darkness. The bar we found to run parallel to the beach, and on the breakers abruptly ending we cautiously turned in once more, and made for a second white line, which, being some distance farther off and topped by the black spectre-like casuarina-trees, we knew to be the mainland. As we neared it the bar was left to seaward.

In the darkness the mouth of the river, which lay between the breakers on the bar and the beach, presented a foaming mass of surf, and no smooth water could be seen. One of the crew ran out a twenty-fathom line and found no bottom. We ran up cautiously to the broken water with sheets in hand, ready to go about at once if we could not find a clear passage.

The water was breaking twenty yards ahead, the sheets were slackened to take off our way, and the twenty-fathom line again run out with the same result—no bottom. It was hauled up quickly and cast again scarcely a boat's length away, when the line stopped short at one fathom. Now we were abreast of the bar. The next minute we were on a shoal-patch, the boat was flung into the air, and a huge wave poured over the gunwales, but fortunately we were off it before a second came to pour an overwhelming flood in to us.

All eyes were on the alert vainly trying to pierce the surrounding blackness. We were tossed from side to side in a caldron of boiling and hissing water. At times the breakers stood high over us, hiding out the very stars in the sky, and coombing over our craft as if about to plunge us into eternity with a titanic deluge. For what seemed an age we were tossed about like a plaything amongst the herculean marine monsters. To seaward was death, on the shore-side sharp needle-like coral-rag white with surf, and all around us the world of fighting billows. A gust of wind filled the sails, and we suddenly found ourselves gliding peacefully on

the placid unruffled waters of a small river. Behind us came the thundering din of the battle of waters through which we had passed. The black crew, who were in a state of terror and helplessness a second before, now found their tongues, and began boisterously laughing and talking as only an African can who has just escaped scatheless from danger.

On the sand beach was the bright red glare of several fires, around which were groups of natives frying fish and boiling rice for their evening meal. Palms and casuarina-trees reared their heads above us, lighted up by a full moon just emerged from a bank of clouds. I ran the boat on to the beach. One of the crew collected a heap of drift-wood, and in a few minutes we were seated around a cheerful fire cooking our dinners. While dinner was progressing the tent was pitched, a mat over some dried grass made an excellent bed, and having satisfied our hunger, the small camp went fast asleep, to dream of our perilous passage through the breakers.

The next morning we were up before sunrise, and as soon as the cooking utensils, tent, and bed were stowed away on board, we drifted down with the ebb-tide out to sea. The monsoon had

not yet sprung up. A breeze blew off the land, generally continuing up to about nine o'clock, when it died away on the approach of the stronger wind from the sea. The water was now quite calm except for the breakers on the bar, which were merely caused by the undulating ocean swell that never ceases. We were carried out without any difficulty, and curiously watched the patches of reefs which had proved so nearly fatal to us in our exciting entry the night before. We skirted the coast-line for some hours. The sun was fiercely hot, and filled the atmosphere with a painfully blinding light. The land was a barren waste of sand, white and dazzling. A few yards from the beach it rose in knolls and hillocks topped with prickly scrub.

As we passed along within two hundred yards of the shore-line, we witnessed the curious optical illusion known as the mirage. Another boat glided among the sandy hillocks, and in this phantom boat we could see ourselves, and every movement that we made was imitated by its ghostly crew. Coming to a sand-heap, the shadow-boat would pass behind, with the top of the masts and sails visible in the background, till it emerged on the other side. We were accom-

panied by our double for two or three hours, until the first few gusts of the cooler sea-breeze dissolved our shadowy companion into the land of spooks.

It was now time for lunch, and we ran the boat up within five yards of the surf. Here we let go the anchor and paid out the chain until the stern was just outside the breakers. Pots and food were tied on to the heads of the crew, and they were carried by an incoming wave on to the beach. I myself plunged in and swam with them. Two hundred yards up, under a shadeless casuarina-tree, a fire was lit and our food cooked. Fresh water had run out, and we were obliged to content ourselves with a small quantity we obtained from a pool left by the rain, but which was so stagnant and putrid that, even after boiling it, it tasted like cayenne-pepper soup. When we had finished our meal we re-embarked in the same manner, though with more difficulty, and not without some excitement, owing to the proximity of three sharks who were also apparently looking out for their lunch.

It was not until nightfall that we again anchored near the beach to sleep. One of the crew was left in charge of the boat to keep her



THE AUTHOR AND NATIVE SERVANTS.







from approaching too near to the surf. I pitched my tent by a native village we found there, and turned in. About midnight the man who was in charge rushed into my tent and called to me to come down at once to the beach, as something had gone wrong with the boat. When I got down to the water's edge I found the sand strewn with pots and pans, boots, sails, and the whole contents of the boat. The tide had gone out, and the moon overhead gave a light almost equal to day. All that I could see of the boat were two masts standing out of the beach. I did not ask for an explanation, as it was only too obvious that my craft had been caught and rolled over by the surf, and buried two feet beneath the smooth sand. I roused up the natives, and messengers were sent in every direction to get men to dig us out. In half an hour there were two hundred natives with hoes busily at work excavating. The tide was now returning, and every effort was made to clear out the sand from both in and around the boat before the first wave reached her. A great trench was dug all around, logs of wood put under the keel, and by the united efforts of all hands her bow was turned to face the sea, only just in time to

meet the first breaker. The sun by this time was lighting up the eastern horizon. The anchor was carried to seaward of the breakers and kept the boat's head to them. The second breaker lifted her up, and pulling like grim death on to the chain, we safely took her over them and out into deeper water. Fortunately she was strongly built, and had suffered little damage from her rough handling. What remained of our effects were collected, and we re-embarked for Mozambique, which we reached the same day.

In February 1889, I left Quillimane for Mozambique. Wishing to see something of the coast-line between these two places, I took a passage in a dhow, a native Indian vessel. The distance from Quillimane to Mozambique is about three hundred miles. The dhow of the present day is probably in no way different from the vessels used by the ancient Phœnicians and Arabs at a time coeval with and anterior to that of Solomon, and even now the Indian seas are navigated by more vessels of this type than any other. It is a vessel eminently suited to seas in which there are regular winds, known there as monsoons or trade-winds, which blow in one direction for several months in the

year. As these crafts can make little way against a head wind, they wait for these monsoons, making the journey between India and East Africa with a wind astern all the way, and at a speed little inferior to some steamers. They are the great carriers of the slave-traffic, and every year a fleet of them leaves the inlets on the coast-line laden with black merchandise for Madagascar, Zanzibar, and the Persian Gulf.

I boarded the dhow in which I was to make my journey about five in the afternoon. We were to weigh anchor at daybreak in the morning. It was pouring with rain, and everything wet and dirty. I clambered up the side and went aft under the deck to the poop. Here the native crew, some eight in number, were crouched. My servant had put my bedding and provisions on one side ready for my arrival. The Custom-house officer was on board, to whom I showed my passport, and rowed back to the shore to have my farewell dinner with Mr Schippers, of the Dutch house, and returned on board the dhow late in the evening. The Indians were all asleep on the deck under the poop, and my mattress and blankets spread ready for me. Early next morning I was

awakened by the creaking of a huge clumsy block that lifted the great yard-arm of the lateen sail, accompanied by the monotone chant of the crew. About 6.30 the rope cable was pulled up and the anchor stowed away on deck. The grass bands that kept the sail furled to the yard-arm were broken, and the great surface of canvas bellied out to the wind with a sharp crack.

The town of Quillimane was soon hidden as we entered the next reach. A couple of hours brought us to the lighthouse at the entrance of the Quillimane river. We anchored and sent back the Custom-house officer to the town, employing the day taking in sand from the beach for ballast, as the dhow was quite empty.

The next morning our boat returned from Quillimane. The weather was boisterous and wet, and we were obliged to leave our moorings and run to Quillimane de Sol under the protection of a sand-bank. A strong gale was blowing from the south-west, and the bar was a mass of foam. The mail-steamer had not yet entered, although due four days ago. We learnt afterwards that she had been obliged to pass, being caught in one of the cyclones or

revolving storms that are of frequent occurrence on this coast during the months of February and March.

After two more days' delay the weather cleared up slightly, and although it was still blowing a gale, our sail was set and course shaped for the bar. As we passed the lighthouse the weather came over dirty again, black clouds rose up from the horizon, and dense rain hid out at times the leading marks showing the channel through the breaking waters ahead. When we got amongst the first of the sandbanks we were pitched and tossed about in the seething water, the great mud-coloured waves towering high over the masts as we descended into the hollows. I took the helm and kept as near as I could judge in the deepest channel, though the whole sea presented one aspect of foaming surf. At last we got into more open water, though our light craft pitched and rolled terribly. After getting a fair offing, our course brought us with the wind astern, and we made fair headway till nightfall. The pitching on the bar had, I found to my discomfort, upset a petroleum-tin over my provisions, so that during the voyage I was entirely

dependent on the crew's rations of curry and rice.

About midnight, after I had turned in, I was awakened by a noise of scurrying and shouting amongst the crew, and jumped up on to the poop, clothed only in my sleeping-dress. The wind had got up, and was now blowing a strong gale. The captain and the crew were on the deck, and the wheel was deserted. The captain had a hatchet in his hand vainly endeavouring to release the sail, which had got jammed, and threatened every moment to broach the ship and turn her over. I rushed up to the wheel and brought the dhow's head up to the wind, keeping her there with some difficulty, while the released strain on the halyards allowed the crew to pull down the sail and rig up a smaller one in its place.

The night was so black and the wind of hurricane force, while the mud-banks off Macusse were so near us to leeward, that I could not go down below again and leave the craft in charge of the frightened Hindoos. I kept my post at the wheel all through the night, drenched with the blinding rain. The prow of the dhow was buried under a mass of foam as we scurried

through the waves. The blackness was so intense that it was with difficulty I could make out the mass of white canvas only a few yards in front. The crew and the captain had disappeared, and I was the only person awake on board. As morning dawned I had the satisfaction of seeing the Premiera Islands some five miles on our port quarter; and there is little doubt, if I had not taken charge of the craft and altered our course considerably from that I found had been taken previously by the captain, all hands would have found a watery grave before sunrise. By daylight the wind had gone down, and for six days we had calm seas and slight head breezes, during which we were obliged to augment our scanty larder by fish caught over the stern, when land was again sighted, and in the afternoon of the sixth day we entered Mozambique harbour, and anchored in the port.

## CHAPTER XI.

## LIFE ON THE ZAMBESI.

THE PEOPLE—QUILLIMANE—SIGNS OF PAST FLOURISHING CONDITION—FEMALE LAND PROPRIETORS—DAILY LIFE IN QUILLIMANE—*COMMANDANTES MILITAR*—PORTUGUESE POLITENESS—THE MUZUNGU—HALF-CASTE TELEGRAPH OPERATORS—LUXURIOUS LAZINESS—ADVICE TO INTENDING COLONISTS—THE URGENT NECESSITY OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE COAST.

THE peoples inhabiting the vast regions of the Zambesi basin comprise Portuguese, English, a few Swiss, Germans, and Dutch, natives of Portuguese India (mostly Goa), Banyans, Hindoos, natives of Cutch, half-caste Portuguese, and the indigenous races Manganja, Maravi, Angoni, Achigunda, Landins, and Mashona on the lower waters, and innumerable other tribes to the north of the Acababassa Falls. I have already mentioned the fact of this being a penal settlement, so that the Portuguese element consists almost



exclusively of petty military officials, convicts, and a few merchants and traders. The remainder of the aliens are essentially engaged in commercial pursuits.

Quillimane is the most populous centre on the river, next to which come Senna, Tete, and Zumbo. The greater part of the country is divided into large estates called *prazos*, which are rented out to private individuals by the Government, who farm the taxes. The owners of these *prazos* have the monopoly of the labour supply, and as they are for the most part rented by people of little or no capital, the development of these large tracts of country has been practically dormant.

A number of small military stations are scattered up the river, presided over by officials called *commandantes*, with a small force of Angola negroes called Cypaes. These officials have considerable influence in the immediate vicinity of their stations, but outside a well-defined and restricted radius away from the river they are practically powerless.

All over this region are found signs of its past flourishing condition, which stand out in sad contrast to the present neglect and poverty.

In the bush one comes across areas covered with a tangled wilderness of neglected coffee-trees, acres of pine-apples, forests of orange and mangoes, and palaces with walls three feet in thickness, dismantled and wrecked, their roofs fallen in, their windows and doors rotted, and rank grass and trees almost burying them from the sight of the passer-by. The drear silence, the air of neglect and decay surrounding these old palatial homes, cannot but fill a traveller in these regions with feelings of deep sorrow when witnessing a scene so pregnant with pathos and disaster.

There is every promise, however, that the increased facilities of communication afforded by the International Flotilla Company will once more make this region a huge garden, and bring back the old times before wealth and energy succumbed to the present poverty and supineness.

In Quillimane there is at present one paper published in the town by an intelligent and clever half-caste. It is radical in politics, and confines itself to attacks on the local system of Government.

The family life of the Portuguese is influenced in a great measure by the climatic conditions and isolation from civilisation,—a state of things which is happily undergoing a change, now that the country is being opened up to the outside world. Most of the females have a very appreciable quantity of African blood. These are called *Senhoras da terra*, many of whom are large land-proprietors, and possessed of considerable wealth. They make good and affectionate wives, and are better suited to withstand the climatic conditions than would be European-born women. A great part of them, however, hold a position little removed from that of concubinage, since the white male population is almost exclusively a transitory one. Amongst the lower classes there exists the grossest and most unbridled immorality, and as a consequence widespread disease. This is especially noticeable among the negro troops, who are practically rendered inefficient for active service owing to this species of sickness. Every Sunday morning in Quillimane a great crowd of beggars is to be seen in the streets suffering from every kind of disease and deformity. They are, however, well provided

for by the generosity of the residents, though they form a most disagreeable and revolting sight in the public thoroughfares.

Life in Quillimane is, on the whole, a monotonous one, and is only relieved by the hospitality and conviviality of the people. Rising at five and six in the morning, there is a slight repast taken, *en déshabille*, of coffee or green tea and biscuits. At ten is the *almoço* or breakfast, generally consisting of fowls, rice, curry, pork, sometimes beef, sheep, goat, or other viands, the lower class having exclusively curry and rice. At three o'clock there is tea, bread and butter, and other light refreshments. At seven is the *jantar* or dinner, similar to the breakfast. After dinner the evening is passed in social visits or the club.

The life in the isolated military stations is a hard and monotonous one, and it is little to be wondered at that under these conditions few good men can be found to accept these posts, especially as every official in the colony is ludicrously underpaid. The action of some of these *commandantes militar* is a grotesque caricature of the Europeans. One I saw last year, an officer of European birth — possibly transported there for



LOKOLOKO, QUILLIMANE RIVER.



no credit of his own — had obtained a holiday, and journeyed from his post on the Shiré to Mopea in a native dug-out, surrounded by negro women, and in a state of gross intoxication at five in the morning, firing indiscriminately on the banks from an antique Snider, greatly to the peril of those on shore, and little to the credit of the dignity of Portuguese officials. Of another specimen of these officers I have already related in describing the action of the *commandante* of Gwengwe. Of some other *commandantes* I can, however, only speak in favour, especially of the *commandante* of the Chinde, Senhor Magalhães, from whom I have always received the greatest hospitality and kindness, as indeed invariably from the Governor-General and officials of the province, and the Governor and officials of Tete.

At Tete and Senna, Sunday is taken advantage of to afford recreation to the majority of the Europeans, who betake themselves to the adjacent estates, where they pass the day in convivialities amidst the delicious perfume of orange, mangoes, and fruit plantations, or make up small parties to traverse the neighbouring jungle in search of game.

The Portuguese on this river evince a polite-

ness and hospitality that puts to shame the more brusque manners of our own countrymen ; and were it not for the conduct of many of the ignorant and petty officials, on whom isolation from headquarters has conferred considerable power in their districts, and which they have often too little *savoir faire* to exert in a congenial spirit towards Europeans, there would be few places in Central Africa more enjoyable from a social point of view.

The industrious and intelligent race of Goanese are the principal Portuguese merchants, and one has much evidence to show that their universal complaints and grievances against the restrictive policy of their own administration are only too well founded.

The Muzungu, or half-caste, is employed extensively in the positions of clerks and telegraph operators, for which they generally evince considerable aptitude.

When I was at Conceição in 1889, a town thirteen miles from the mouth of the river, a Dutch vessel arrived and had almost discharged her cargo, when a telegram came up from the entrance of the river that a vessel was sighted out to sea. Several hours after this intimation,



another telegram arrived, that the vessel was crossing the bar; and the next morning a third message acquainted us that this vessel was proceeding up the river to our settlement. As the vessel alongside the wharf had finished discharging, she went down the river to make room for the second vessel whose arrival was being wired to us. We afterwards found that this was unnecessary, as we were merely being informed of the sighting and arrival of the vessel that had just left the wharf, where she had been moored for several days. A message was sent on one occasion from Mopea to Quillimane, a distance of eighty miles, arriving three months later at its destination. It would, however, be unfair to give these as typical instances of the manner in which these half-caste operators work, though they are by no means isolated.

I have often felt a kind of semi-commiseration for these half-castes. They hold an unfortunate position, like Muhammed's coffin, midway between what is their heaven, the white man, and their semi-compatriots, the ordinary negro. The white man looks upon them as inferior, the negro gazes askance at them, and in this way they neither belong to one nor the other. Their posi-

tion is indeed so dubious, that they have to go to extraordinary lengths to uphold it—a state of things that is not unknown even in European civilisation, where people on the boundary-line fashion all their actions to imitate those they consider their betters. A half-caste Muzungu imagines that a white man never works, and that idleness is the escutcheon of nobility and civilisation. It has often caused me mixed amusement and pity to come accidentally across one of these would-be representatives of our own civilisation seated on a bottomless chair, with five brawny valets around him, no blacker than himself, one brushing his teeth, another washing his face, another vainly endeavouring to get out the spirals of his woolly hair, another cleaning his nails, and the fifth holding a cracked mirror, in which his negro features are somewhat reflected and distorted.

Numberless have been the accounts culled from African note-books put before the public, detailing with more or less ability the everyday incidents of African life. Indeed these descriptions ceaselessly reiterated would seem liable to create in the satiated reader almost a *nausea Africana*. A new African school has however arisen, in which the commercial and financial possibilities of these

vast regions are made the primary and exclusive objects of travellers' investigations. The utilitarian spirit of civilisation has seized on even the orthodox African tramp. On the ultra-ferocity of the travellers' mosquito, his camp troubles and joys, the theft of yards of calico by avaricious savages, on the unusual dampness of African rain, and on the nightly surmises of general massacre, from which the traveller invariably escapes to publish his notes, the writer would be silent. The African traveller often experiences a species of imaginary proprietorship of the district through which he has passed. With many this is so potent, that like a dealer in small wares they feel an uncontrollable impulse to cry up their ephemeral possessions in the most exaggerated and enthusiastic terms. In this manner their oftentimes delusive embellishments have cast much unmerited disrepute on African credit. Evil-smelling swampy depressions have been compared favourably with our finest European lake scenery. Colonists have been invited with the utmost *sanguifroid* to numberless Edens, to find the site of their utopia underground. In their extravagant laudation of regions as suited for white colonisation — given often without expe-

rience or sufficient local knowledge—they appear guilty of inexcusable callousness ; and of the oft-times fatal consequences to their implicit victims they are as placidly oblivious as of their own culpableness.

Notwithstanding the assertions of enthusiasts, it is indisputable that tropical Africa under the past conditions of life has been, as a whole, decidedly detrimental to the health of Europeans. Bearing this fact well in mind, he who wishes to enjoy health, or even to live, will have to fashion his mode of living in accordance with the requirements of his new environment. There are certain broad lines which may be termed the axioms of health in this region, and should be strenuously followed by every one. The many other rules for guiding one's life can only be learned from personal experience, or that of those who have spent years in the tropics. Following rigorously such a course, there is no reason to suppose that the ordinary European could not live and enjoy health as excellent as that experienced by the average Anglo-Indian. It is of primary importance that the resident should be within easy and rapid communication with the coast. Swampy depressions should be avoided, and a good com-

fortable house erected on rising ground near the best available water. First and last, there should be no intention to rough it. Health, and even life itself, are only ensured by comfort and a good table. There should be no stint of appetising food, and a good cook is the best physician. Alcohol in the form of light wines should not be despised. Quinine should be used only to ward off fever during its course, or when its premonitory symptoms are felt. Violent exertion should be avoided, as well as unnecessary exposure to the sun.

Old and new Anglo-Africans can be recognised at a glance, and it is not unprofitable for a new-comer to compare them. The one eschews all arduous exertion, and is oftener found reclining in a comfortable chair than tramping in the sun. The other delights in breaking the record across country, and to the grave. He has a passion for football and cricket, and shows his hardiness in living as much as possible on native food. Then he adds one more to the long sick and death roll, whilst the former is left complacently to await the advent of wiser men.

In treating of new countries, therefore, especially of those in the far interior, with regard to

their suitability to European residents, and thence their commercial value, one must first consider the facilities they possess of communication with the coast and home civilisation.

Without cheap and rapid means of reaching the seaboard, the resident cannot hope to obtain any of the common luxuries that have become necessities under his new conditions of life. Commerce and trade experience obstacles too serious to admit of their effective development. The country remains in its primitive state, and the European who has the temerity to cast his lot there, suffers by sickness and death from the hardships enforced by his isolated existence. Many regions possessing abundant resources have been necessarily branded as death-spots for this cause alone, and must ever continue so under such conditions.

Since, then, facility of communication is of primary importance to the development of these inland districts, both in the interests of commerce and civilisation, it is not difficult to understand how nothing has in the past tended so seriously and effectively to close the vast Zambesi regions to European enterprise as the primitive and

paralysing means of reaching the coast previously existing there. All this is now changed, and it can be confidently asserted that there is no richer or better part of Africa worthy of the consideration of intending colonists.

## CHAPTER XII.

COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL PROSPECTS OF THE  
ZAMBESI BASIN.

CHEAP AND RAPID MEANS OF COMMUNICATION—CENTRAL AFRICAN  
AND ZOUTSPANBERG GROUP OF COMPANIES—THE GREAT CEN-  
TRAL AFRICAN WATERWAY—PRODUCTS—MINERAL WEALTH—  
EXPORTS AND IMPORTS—AFRICAN LAKES COMPANY.

IN estimating the commercial and financial prospects of huge regions lately opened to the civilised world, such as those drained by the great Zambesi and Shiré rivers, one of the primary and most important considerations is that of the facilities existing for communication and transport.

Of all means of communication in countries of this nature, there is naturally nothing which tends so rapidly and effectually to develop commerce and civilisation as that offered by good



water-carriage, owing to cheapness and easy utilisation.

The next consideration must be directed to the productiveness of the soil and the suitability of the district for European supervision of labour and colonisation. In treating of other regions in Africa, there are few that possess these advantages to the same extent as that under discussion. The regions drained by the Zambesi and its tributaries, besides these advantages, however, have another almost unique in Africa, by reason of their abundant water-supply and remarkable characteristics—viz., that of having navigable communication with the seaport from almost every part.

When we consider how greatly the want of cheap and rapid communication has handicapped most of the other interior regions of Africa, and how healthy highlands elsewhere can only be reached by perilous journeys of many miles over the most deadly swamps and waterless wastes, it will be sufficiently evident that a country like this, possessing none of these disadvantages, has better prospects than any other part of Africa; and this is perhaps the only part of Africa where navigable streams are to

be found in the heart of an auriferous and coal district.

The International Flotilla Company, formed in connection with the Central African and Zoutspanberg Company, Limited, have already two or three steamers and other river-craft plying on these waterways, and they will doubtless during the present year have to considerably augment their flotilla to meet the rapidly increasing exigencies of transport, there being already more traffic on these waterways than they are able to carry.

The development of the resources of these huge regions has received, since the opening up of the Chinde route, a very great impetus, as river-craft are now able to trans-ship at once alongside of ocean steamers at the Chinde Port. The whole aspect of trade and commerce in Central Africa has been revolutionised.

A casual glance at the map will show what an illimitless horizon is open to the future of Central Africa. From the Chinde to the north end of Lake Nyassa there is a navigable communication into the very heart of the continent for the enormous distance of seven hundred

miles, with only one small break, over which is an excellent road.

From the north end of Lake Nyassa for two hundred miles there is a good road to the southern shores of Tanganyika, whence there is a renewed navigable waterway to the north end of this lake, a distance of some four hundred miles. Here only remains a short distance over a healthy plateau when the great lakes in the vicinity of Uganda lead on to the Nile, and thence to the Mediterranean ; so that, with comparatively very few miles of roadway here and there, we have a good navigable waterway reaching from the Chinde to Alexandria.

To attempt to develop the resources of these regions, ignoring this great highway which nature has furnished to effectively open up the vast interior of this continent, can only be as puerile as it is futile.

The vastness of this new field, the many variations in altitude and climate, naturally give agriculture and commerce an enormous scope for extension and development.

Valuable products — such as cotton, indigo, rubber, orchilla-weed, cocoa, oil-seeds, gums, drugs, hard woods such as ebony, African teak,

lignum-vitæ, hard red wood like mahogany, hard yellow woods, fibres, wheat, rice, Indian corn, millets, sugar, tobacco, cassava, vegetables, both European and native, vanilla, tea and coffee—are grown with success, and of many of these there is already a considerable output.

The increased facilities now existing of communication with the seaport will have the natural tendency of augmenting the cultivation and export of these products to an almost illimitable extent.

On the plateau in the Loangwa Zambesi basin running north to Bangweolo, Katanga country, and Nyassa, we have an enormous region eminently suited to white colonisation, the altitude varying from 2000 to 8000 or 9000 feet above the sea-level. In many places on this plateau, especially in the vicinity of the Central African Company's stations, which are stretched over it, we have native-grown flour, manufactured sugar, rice, and many other products, including most kinds of European vegetables grown on an extensive scale. There is an enormous quantity of fruits—such as oranges, mangoes, limes, pine-apples, and many others; and the immunity of

the Europeans settled there from fever and sickness bears abundant evidence of the salubrity of this great plateau. It is, moreover, under a week's journey from this plateau to the seaport by steamer.

The coffee grown there has proved its excellency by the exceptionally high price it commands in the European market, and already there are considerably more than two million plants bearing berries. Besides the bright agricultural prospects that these countries offer, their development will doubtless be influenced very appreciably by their well-known mineral wealth.

Along the banks of the Zambesi, over an area of more than 500 square miles, are rich coal-deposits in the immediate vicinity of the waterway. The report of M. Lapierre on this coal-deposit shows its great value in its suitability for the use of river-craft and for heating tubular boilers. Its value is, moreover, very greatly enhanced by the unusual facilities obtained from its close proximity to a river having direct and unbroken communication with the sea.

The number of steamers now plying on these rivers offers a ready and good market for a

considerable output, and the Chinde allows it to be carried to coast steamers.

There are abundant proofs of the mineral wealth of this plateau, and the rich auriferous deposits can be traced with the greatest facility over a very extended area reaching from the vicinity of the Shiré river to the Katanga country. Although, from reasons detailed in another chapter, the working of reefs and alluvial gold has only been continued on a trifling scale during this century, nevertheless the signs of a casual visit to the country indicate the richness of these deposits, apart from the fact that at the end of last century the gold and silver coinage of the Mozambique province was obtained almost exclusively from this region, and even at present the industry of manufacturing gold ornaments is extensively carried on by the inhabitants of the Zambesi from native ore.

The local political conditions which have for so long closed these countries to civilisation, being as they are now altogether changed, it is needless to say that in the immediate future the mining world will not permit this lucrative field to remain longer undeveloped. Outcrops of copper are seen from the Zambesi to Katanga.

Silver-mines, worked roughly but remuneratively at the beginning of the century, are known to exist. There are signs also of tin and plumbago, while iron is universally distributed.

Seeing that these minerals are in close proximity to large coal-formation and navigable communication with the coast, it is no exaggeration to prophesy for this part a mining future second to none in Africa.

No estimate of the resources of this country can be based on past Customs reports either for export or import. Since 1891, when the last returns were made, the whole condition of trade and commerce in this country has undergone a radical change. The old conditions were inimical in the highest degree both politically and naturally to the developement of a country possessing most auspicious advantages, and in a new country tended most effectually to dwarf and restrict all commercial enterprise.

The exports in 1891 amounted to £123,000.

About 25 tons of ivory left by the Zambesi, which may be roughly estimated at 25 per cent of ivory taken yearly out of the Zambesi basin, the greater part of which reaches the coast in the vicinity of Zanzibar and Mozambique.

These returns are merely based on the exports of ground-nuts (*Arachis hypogæa*), oil-seeds, sesame-seed, copra, bee's-wax, india-rubber, ivory, gold-dust, hides, and orchilla-weed. Rice and grain of various sorts are exported to other parts of the province, and when the crops have been good, to India as ballast in returning dhows.

Owing to the former insufficiency of transport, it has been impossible to export the valuable woods and timber which cover vast tracts of the inland countries; and for the same reason, products such as seeds, copra, hides, orchilla-weed, and grain, owing to their bulk, have only been hitherto exported and cultivated in insignificant quantities.

The imports for the same year amounted to about £157,000. These consisted mostly of spirits, cotton of various kinds, coloured piece-goods, beads, brass wire, hardware, guns and powder, wines, dry goods, planks, white timber, tiles, petroleum, cement, and corrugated iron for building.

These goods come from London, Bombay, Switzerland, Lisbon, Hamburg, Rotterdam, and Marseilles. The cotton goods used for barter come chiefly from Bombay, whose goods have to



a great extent taken the place of Manchester, chiefly owing to the quality and price being more suited to the requirements of the market, they being both inferior to and cheaper than the article manufactured in Manchester. Alcohol, of which it is estimated there were in that year 2500 gallons imported, comes chiefly from Hamburg, Rotterdam, and Marseilles. Petroleum mostly comes from Batoum. Switzerland and Austria supply respectively handkerchiefs and beads. Lisbon imports wine, mostly "vinho tinto." Planks and tiles for building purposes are from Marseilles. Guns and powder from Rotterdam.

This return does not include, however, the goods imported *viâ* Chinde in that year—that means of ingress into the river being at that time not used to any great extent.

At the present day, however, the fresh blood and energy infused through the various companies owning and developing these large territories, and the increased natural facilities of communication, are with astounding rapidity opening up every corner of this great country, and a white population is rapidly pouring in; so that, as a necessary sequence, future returns

of imports and exports from and to the Zambesi region must be far in excess and importance to those of the year mentioned.

The group of companies—Katanga, Central African and Zoutspanberg, and Companhia da Zambesia—who have valuable rights and freehold possessions over a very considerable portion of these regions, together with their latest extension, the International Flotilla Company, will doubtless be chiefly instrumental in opening up the Zambesi basin; and the last, under good management, cannot but by force of events become one of the greatest navigating and transport agencies south of the equator.

The Katanga possesses an area of some 50,000 square miles to the south-east of the Congo Free State, and extends to the Muchinga mountains, the watershed of the Zambesi and Congo rivers (see map).

Here, on the Loangwa river, is met the possessions of the Central African and Zoutspanberg, and the Companhia da Zambesia, the former of which reaches to the Shiré river, where it owns a large area of freehold land in the British Protectorate, besides valuable concessions owned and leased at the Chinde Port.





The Companhia da Zambesia is fortunate in possessing the rich and extensive coal-deposits on the main stream of the Zambesi, and the auriferous deposits in the vicinity.

The mutual interest that these companies have one in the other, and the fact that they are all working together on a strictly international basis, make them unique in the commercial history of Africa, while their enormous territories and established mineral and agricultural resources should undoubtedly place the group in the foremost rank of African enterprises to open up and develop on a commercial and financial basis the newly opened regions of Central Africa.

While speaking of those larger and more important enterprises, mention must be made of the work done in the past by the pioneer African Lakes Company. It is deeply to be regretted that the scope of this older concern has been so attenuated, owing to the many and paralysing difficulties that it so bravely and unsuccessfully, from a financial point of view, tried during the early years to fight against. And though its sphere of usefulness is now necessarily superseded by enterprises later and more vigorous, due credit must justly be awarded it for the

noble and characteristic perseverance that has sustained it during the many grievous and disheartening obstacles to its progress in the early pioneer days of the Shiré colony.

In summing up the commercial and financial prospects of the Zambesi basin, we may recapitulate the advantages these vast regions possess from their unique means of cheap and abundant water communication to a seaport, the salubrity of their climate, their suitability to European colonisation, their agricultural and mineral wealth, and the friendliness and industry of the people—facts from which the least sanguine cannot but prognosticate a most brilliant and successful future.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE CHINDE AND ZAMBESI DELTA.

ZAMBESI DELTA—ITS MOUTHS—QUAQUA RIVER—UNSUITABILITY OF ROUTE *VIA* QUILLIMANE—DISASTROUS EFFECTS TO COMMERCE OF PREVIOUS MEANS OF COMMUNICATION—A KEY TO OPEN THE WATER-WAY FROM THE SEA—KONGONI AND CHINDE—ADVANTAGES AND PERMANENCY OF CHINDE ENTRANCE—ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE DIFFICULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND ITS SUCCESS.

THE delta of the Zambesi covers an area of some 2500 square miles: it commences ninety miles from the coast, near the confluence of the main stream and Shiré river. Here the highlands of the interior are first met, and it is highly probable that at no very remote epoch both the Zambesi and Shiré emptied themselves by separate mouths into the Indian Ocean. Since then, however, the whole coast-line has been altered, and an immense alluvial region formed.

The delta for the most part is low-lying and swampy, intersected by ridges of uniform elevation. The direction of these ridges corresponds with the coast-line, and they mark the positions of the former shore-lines. The vast quantity of alluvial deposit brought down by the river from the interior plateaus is rapidly and appreciably augmenting the area of the delta seawards.

The Zambesi discharges itself into the sea by seven mouths: the most southern is Melambe. It has never been surveyed, and has a bar of alluvia, and marine deposit, on which the sea breaks at all tides and conditions of weather. The bar is altogether impassable, even by boats. Its channel joins the Inhamissengo, or more properly the Mosella river, seven miles from the sea. The Katarina and the main stream, the East Luabo (or Coama), and also the Maria, have all impassable bars similar to the Melambe; so that their mouths are effectually closed to navigation.

The Inhamissengo, or Kongoni mouth, as it is more generally called, was one of the mouths by which Dr Livingstone entered the Zambesi. This mouth is connected with the main stream by three



channels—the Mosella, the Madredane, and the Inhangurue.

The Mosella joins the main stream thirty-five miles from the sea ; it follows a course fairly parallel to the Zambesi ; fifteen miles inland it is broken up by a number of small islands, and is connected with the main stream by a narrow channel called the Madredane.

Two miles below the Madredane a small settlement named Conceição was founded in 1886 by Captain Castilho, at that time the Governor-General of the Mozambique province. This settlement consisted, as far as commerce is concerned, of the Oost Afrikaanische Cie.'s factory, and the Government were represented by a *Commandante Militar, Capitão do Porto, Diretor D'Alfandega*, and their staffs.

From two to four small sailing-vessels of some 500 tons entered the Kongoni during the year. A substantial wharf was erected by Captain Castilho, alongside of which vessels could moor in two and a half fathoms (low water). Telegraphic communication was effected across the swamps to the lighthouse at the entrance thirteen miles distant, so that the arrival and departure of vessels could be announced at the settlement.

The Kongoni bar, however, of which I made a survey, appears to be rapidly silting up; and vessels drawing more than twelve feet cannot enter except under the most favourable circumstances. With the slightest sea outside, the bar is impassable.

These and other natural difficulties effectually prevent the use of this entrance of the Zambesi; for not only has the bar less water on it every year, but it is also very variable in direction of channel. Since my discovery, however, of the navigability of the Chinde entrance and demonstration of its incomparable superiority to the Kongoni, the settlement of Conceição has been entirely removed and rebuilt on the south bank of the Chinde entrance, where a large and populous town is at the present time in course of rapid erection.

The Quaqua or Quillimane river cannot strictly be called a branch of the Zambesi, as in its lower waters it is practically an inlet of the sea, and its upper waters are merely a drain that receives and carries away the surplus moisture of the morass of which it forms a part. At intervals it widens into more or less open swampy depressions, allowing a canoe or light-draught boat to be paddled

and punted with difficulty during a few months of the year. At other times it can often be crossed dry-footed. The bed of its upper waters, called Barabanda, in the vicinity of the Zambesi, is some fifteen feet above the level of the bed of the main stream, so that it is only in the highest floods that the waters of the Zambesi overflow into their drain and make a temporary connection. The Quaqua was until quite recently exclusively used by trade and commerce in effecting a communication between the Zambesi and Nyassa districts with home markets.

From the Portuguese custom-house at Quillimane, thirteen miles from the sea, produce and foreign goods had to be carried in lighters or the most primitive of dug-outs, for some five days. Between the Zambesi and the farthest inland point attainable by the craft on the Quaqua is a tract of low swampy country three to eight miles across. During the rainy season this part of the journey was, if not altogether impassable, fraught with imminent risk to produce and goods in transit. It was too much to expect that a native would be able to carry on his head a heavy cumbersome load through two feet of mud and water for such a distance without damage to his

burden ; indeed, 60 per cent suffered loss by water and exposure.

So slow and primitive means of communication in a country like this offered the greatest facilities for the perpetration of the constant thefts that added so considerably to the many disadvantages trade experienced in this country. It is obvious, therefore, how impossible was the development of the interior regions under such prohibitive restrictions, and it is a matter of no astonishment that they had been for so long a *terra incognita* to the financial and commercial world.

An experience of five years' consular work in this part of Africa more than sufficed to demonstrate the importance of the affected development of this region to British commercial and colonial enterprise. The extraordinary water-way stretching in a direct line through the richest and most salubrious countries of the African continent, from the Zambesi to the very shores of the Mediterranean, offered facilities for the extension of British commerce and colonisation through such enormous tracts of virgin regions, that the imagination alone could follow the results of their development. This stupendous possibility had but one obstacle and that unfortunately of

the most vital importance. The door to this magnificent natural roadway was closed, and the continent practically sealed to the outside world.

Schemes for reaching the inland regions by railways have been mooted, but from the inherent pecuniary conditions have proved hitherto as abortive as they were financially inexpedient. To make a railroad over hopeless swamps and quagmires such as exist between the coast and the healthy inland plateaus, would necessarily entail an expenditure of life and capital such as must appal the most sanguine speculator, who has ever before him the patent fact of the futility of attempting to compete with existent water communication by land transit.

Our colonists and countrymen on the Upper Zambesi and Nyassa regions, separated from civilisation by such primitive means of transport and inimical fiscal conditions, were necessarily cut off from all hopes of utilising their labours and industry. To afford them necessary and effective local protection, our Government were confronted by the insuperable and perhaps not unnatural susceptibilities of a foreign Power, who conceived such a policy antagonistic to their best colonial interests.

The appeals of our countrymen for aid to ensure the immunity of their lives and labours from the many dangers which imperilled them, were met by the response that it was futile to rely on Government assistance; and as by individual and private enterprise they had built up the colony, so they must perforce defend and retain it. It was shown to be of no avail to declare the vast inland waters international, since they could only be reached by a route traversing alien territory, subject to the most paralysing physical and political disadvantages. So lugubrious, indeed, was the political outlook for the future of this immense region in 1888, that many who had spent the best of their lives and labours in its development were seriously contemplating a retreat *en masse* to some more favoured country, where they could enjoy the fruits of their enterprise untrammelled by such disastrous obstacles as obtained here.

Being fully cognisant that a key only was wanting to unlock this river-door to radically reverse the political and commercial aspect of affairs in Central Africa, I determined in that year to devote my time and means exclusively to the solution of this serious and momentous

problem. By the end of August I succeeded in procuring a passage by a small English steamer, The Lion, from Quillimane to the Kongoni mouth of the Zambesi.

On September 10, after a residence of two weeks at the settlement of Conceição, I accepted an invitation of Senhor d'Andrade to visit his estate at Sumbo, on one of the many branches of the Zambesi. Arriving at the Chinde village, we followed the tortuous course of the stream for ten miles, and put up at this gentleman's house. He had only recently been established in this place, and I have to acknowledge the generous and kind hospitality which I received from him, and for which the Portuguese on these water-ways are so renowned.

The agricultural experiments of Senhor d'Andrade furnish abundant evidence of the productiveness of this region. The estate on the Chinde river contains flourishing orchards of almost every tropical fruit and product of commercial value. The delta, from the richness of its soil and unique facilities of communication, will doubtless, in the near future, become a most important grain and cereal producing district. The present export of oil-seeds, rubber, copra, and grain, is very con-

siderable, while hundreds of square miles, equally suitable for their extensive cultivation, are awaiting the advent of the agriculturist. The inhabitants are peaceful and industrious. Labour is cheap and abundant, so that the prospects of the agricultural developments of this region are of the most encouraging nature.

There are at present two mouths open to navigation, the Kongoni and the Chinde, previously mentioned, of both of which I have made recent surveys (see map). The latter will permit an ocean-going steamer entering the Zambesi, and transshipping immediately from and into the river craft. Hulks to meet the exigencies of trade should, without delay, be placed in the Chinde entrance. These being used as floating wharves, would afford very considerable facilities to trade development. By this means those crushing and paralysing conditions that have been hitherto killing all commercial enterprise in these regions are altogether avoided.

Compared with the other outlets of the Zambesi, the Chinde presents peculiar characteristics. The formation of its confluence with the main stream is of such a nature that the vast volume of suspended alluvial matter brought down from



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*The Chin*  
*Lieut. A*

*Inli.*

T O



MOUTHS OF THE  
ZAMBESI RIVER

A horizontal scale bar labeled "Nautical Miles" with markings from 0 to 5.

*The Ginde River is corrected from a survey by  
Lieut. AF Balliear, HMS Sterk, July 1889*



*Printed by permission from the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*

Turner & Shawe, 83 Brewer Street W

the interior is swept past, and even in the greatest floods only an insignificant portion finds its way into this channel. As a result of its extremely tortuous course, and the fact that its whole length is subject to tidal influence, whatever fluvial *débris* finds its way into the Chinde is invariably precipitated before the bar is reached, much of it, indeed, being carried back into the main stream. This is naturally of primary importance in estimating the probabilities of the permanency of this outlet for navigation. On the Chinde bar there is scarcely a trace of alluvial deposit, and it possesses all the characteristics of an estuary of the sea. During the dry season the ebb-currents reaching their minimum of force, the flood-tides gradually silt up the entrance with sand; but as the rains increase the volume and power of the ebb tides, this sand is rapidly scoured out and the channel materially deepened.

At the other mouths of the Zambesi, however, we find the bars covered with alluvial deposit precipitated for some distance out to sea, so that not only are they subject to silt from the seaward, but are constantly augmented by the deposition of fluvial *débris*. It is therefore obviously erroneous to predicate the variableness of the Chinde

outlet on deductions based on the remaining outlets, for the conditions pertaining to the Chinde bar are essentially different from those obtaining in the other mouths of the Zambesi river.

Seeing, then, how the channel of this bar is slightly silted up during the dry season, and the accumulated deposit swept away periodically during the rains, it will be at once evident that if treated in the manner that has proved so successful under similar conditions in the case of the Mississippi, the depth of the channel would become permanently increased by the silt being carried back into the sea with the ebb tides.

This brief explanation may be necessary, since the permanent value of this outlet has been considerably depreciated, owing to a want of information regarding its physical characteristics.<sup>1</sup>

From these and other minor indications I became convinced that in the highest probability a deep navigable channel would be found over its bar, and once I had ascertained this by practical experiment, my labours would be successfully

<sup>1</sup> It may be mentioned that since these words were first written four years have passed, and the depth of the channel over the bar has remained unaltered during this time, furnishing indisputable corroboration of my remarks on the permanency of this entrance.

—AUTHOR.

terminated. This opinion, expressed to the few residents, met with unqualified incredulity from every one except my host, Senhor d'Andrade. This gentleman was at the time engaged in building a number of lighters for river traffic, and he offered me the use of one to test the accuracy of my theory of the navigability of the Chinde entrance. He hoped the lighter would be completed in the middle of the following January. No other suitable craft being available, I was only too gratified at my good fortune in obtaining this generous offer.

For five months I continued my wanderings amid the islands and streams of this great alluvial region. I camped among the oil-seed plantations that here and there covered the country for many square miles, or amid groves of cocoa-palms, under which the natives were busy preparing copra for export, or in the midst of forest and jungle whose luxuriant vegetation gave evidence of the wealth of the virgin soil beneath.

Though this region can naturally not lay claim to the salubrity of the interior highlands, nevertheless it is noteworthy that the few English and other Europeans who have made their homes

there have enjoyed a remarkable immunity from serious ailments, consequent on the peculiar conditions of their environment. There are few who have not experienced excellent health after a continued residency of from five to twenty years or more; and I myself, though exposed to all the inclemencies of a rainy season in tents, suffered no ill results from climatic and other local causes.

In January 1889 I returned to my friend, Senhor d'Andrade, and found to my satisfaction that the long-awaited craft was already in the water. We started without further delay down stream for the mouth, with, on my part, considerable trepidation as to the result of my weary and protracted travels. At night we anchored near the beach of Mitaone Island. Anxiously gazing seawards in the direction of the bar, we could discern nothing but an apparently unbroken line of breakers, whose ceaseless roar can scarcely be rendered in words.

A few days later we drifted out in our unwieldy craft towards the breakers. The native crew, novices to the use of the cumbersome oars, were powerless to affect the direction of the lighter. A strong wind was blowing off shore,

and the tide rushed out with headlong velocity. Swept helplessly towards the breakers, I had scarcely time to throw over our anchor and run out the flying chain before we were brought up with a sudden jerk that sorely tested the native-manufactured iron close under, the combing surf dashing over our stern. The tide rushed past us, and to drift a yard meant certain death; but the anchor held staunchly, and we waited with the greatest anxiety for the incoming tide to drift us back shorewards from our perilous predicament. I made several unsuccessful attempts to cross the bar, accompanied by two Portuguese gentlemen, though I was still sanguine of my ultimate success.

Two weeks passed, and I determined to make another venture, though neither of my friends thought it expedient to again accompany me, considering their previous unfortunate experience. On my last essay fortune proved more propitious, and I had the great satisfaction of passing over the bar, through the channel, and out to sea—an adventure naturally not without considerable peril, from the nature of my craft.

Having completed my arduous task satisfactorily, and equal to my most sanguine expect-

tations, I returned with the greatest possible expedition to Quillimane, where I arrived on February 26, 1889, after a series of adventures of more or less disagreeable nature.

The object of my extended journey was accomplished, and I had shown that the door of Central Africa was opened, and sealed no longer. A few months later a British man-of-war cleaved the great Zambesi, and the Union-jack waved over its waters.

To-day a populous and rapidly-increasing town occupies the site of the bushes and jungle I camped amid three years ago. Ocean steamers are anchored by this new port, and the whole wilderness has been transformed into a hive of civilised industry. The internationalisation of the river has been made practicable by means of this discovery, the Shiré highlands efficiently protected, and British industry and commercial enterprise afforded an almost illimitable field for their energies.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## UNDI AND MAKANGA COUNTRIES.

MUZUNGUS—HEAD-DRESS AND CLOTHING—THE CHIEF AND ELDERS  
 —TOWNS—DIETARY UTENSILS—ALCOHOLIC DRINKS—MEALS—  
 TOBACCO — METHODS OF SMOKING — POTTERY — IRONWARE—  
 BARK-CLOTH—IVORY HUNTERS—FISHING—GAME—TSETSE FLY.

THE inhabitants of Undi and Makanga territories show few signs of intermarriage with any of the neighbouring tribes, though the prevalence of Portuguese admixture is very noticeable in the Makanga district.

The first class, resulting from intermixture with Portuguese, is mostly seen in a few of the women employed in the chief's harem, who have been captured from the Portuguese settlements on the river.

The offspring constitute a well-defined class, who are styled Muzungus. They occupy a social

status generally superior to that of the pure natives.

The characteristics of the men evince a much lower moral type. They are conspicuous for callousness and a predilection for the grossest forms of brutality, dishonesty, and sensuousness. Subsequent children evince appreciable improvement as they become immersed into the national type.

Tattooing is universally practised, though circumcision is not performed. The practice of mutilating the body is not customary, except in Undi's territory and in mountainous districts, where are teeth-filing and boring of the nose and lips.

The better class are clothed more or less from head to foot. The mass of the population wear a loin-cloth. Those in the mountainous regions have often simply a rough skin or piece of bark-cloth. The women wear handkerchiefs and coloured chintz, one handkerchief being tied round the breast and another round the waist. Underneath the latter a belt of beads, embroidered in different patterns, encircles the body. These belts sometimes weigh one or two pounds. Hats woven from native straw are commonly seen.

The Makanga have short curly hair, the ordinary African type. The greater part of the people, both male and female, shave their heads periodically. In certain districts, however, more especially among the mountain tribes, the women only shave, while the men work their hair into a variety of patterns, such as small spirals ending in miniature tufts, geometrical figures, as triangles and circles, and other varieties of adornment, each locality having its characteristic fashion.

It is not a rule for natives to possess hair on their face, though in individuals, more especially of the upper class, a small tuft is worn on the chin, and amongst a few is seen a more or less developed moustache, curled and pointed with a care and pride worthy of a *habitué* of Bond Street. The razor employed in shaving is of native manufacture. It is a circular piece of hardened iron in the shape of a miniature garden-spud.

The natives of this region are physically amongst the strongest in Central Africa: they will carry loads of seventy to ninety pounds, if of soft material like calico, for a considerable distance without showing indications of fatigue.

The principal ornaments worn by the upper —

↓ class, those belonging to the ruling families, are small discs of hippopotamus ivory worn on the arm and breast. Bracelets of rhinoceros horn and elephant's hair are commonly worn, as well as rings made of native silver. The ornaments of the women are chiefly beads, for the possession of which they have a great predilection. A circlet of beads around the head, a thick belt round the waist, and bangles on the hands and legs, are greatly admired.<sup>1</sup> The *pilele* or lip-ring is only worn in the mountainous regions. In young girls the *pilele* consists of a straw inserted in an incision in the upper lip: this incision is increased in size until, as an old woman, it assumes the proportion of a *serviette*-ring. When the possessor of one of these ornaments smiles, the ring causes the upper lip to fly backwards, the nose appears in the centre of the ring, and the teeth and gums are exposed beneath—a combination hideous in the eyes of every one but the natives and possessor.

The chief and head-men when travelling are carried on the shoulders of slaves, the chief being

<sup>1</sup> The legs are often encircled by rings of thick brass wire. This fashion not only entails considerable inconvenience to the wearer, but often has to be abandoned after much suffering from the formation of ulcers.

always preceded by a band of musical performers, and on his arrival in the vicinity of a town by a salute of musketry. Being seated, he is surrounded by a circle of the populace, who, if he should eat in public, immediately rise to their feet while his meal is in progress. Two or three slave-boys are always in attendance, and when he expectorates, it is the duty of these boys to carefully cover up the expectoration with sand or earth. Whenever the chief rises, no one remains seated.

In the case of head-men or elders, much the same etiquette is followed. Should the father or an aged relative of the elder be in the neighbourhood, the greatest caution is observed that the one should not be seen by the other, it being considered very unpropitious for a son to see or meet his aged relative in public.

The towns are in some cases very similar to those on the coast. A number of houses, six or more, according to the wealth of the owner, are enclosed in a high grass palisade, the interior of this palisade being considered strictly private. Care is observed in the frontage, so that they form a number of tortuous streets and lanes intersecting the town in every direction.

↓ Kapako has all the appearance of a coast Swahili town. Inside one of these private enclosures is a number of round or oblong grass-and-wattle houses ; the largest, open on all sides, forms a reception-room to which visitors are invited. Other houses are apportioned to the wives, the principal of whom have mostly their own private residences. A house used for a kitchen, and others for servants, and a small kraal for goats and cattle, complete the native's private establishment.

Outside of the principal towns there are wide roads carefully cleaned and hoed for some distance. Some towns are surrounded by a strong stockade, others by a wide ditch and embankment, while others, again, are merely straggling groups of enclosures surrounded by grass fences.

The interior of the house used as a reception-room possesses little or no furniture, the mud floor being simply covered with grass matting, on which the guests recline.

The owner's private house often possesses a wooden bedstead. The wives' establishments comprise private cooking utensils, a mat floor, and her own personal property.

A number of beehive grass huts in the

enclosure are used as stores for grain and cereals.

Fire is obtained by the friction of two sticks, one being placed on the ground having a small hole in which the other is rapidly rotated by the hands. Flint and steel are sometimes employed. The only fuel used is wood.

The dietary is mostly a vegetable one, the staple foods being maize or Indian corn—either in the cob or ground into flour—millet, rice, one or two green herbs, yams, sweet-potato, and pepper; amongst the better class, fowls, eggs, goats, sheep, cattle, wheaten bread, and sugar, both of which are cultivated and manufactured locally. Fish abound in the rivers and streams, and form an important article of consumption. Game of all kinds are plentiful. Rats are considered a delicacy. In some districts cakes are made of fried ants and grasshoppers. During the season an enormous quantity of fruits enters into the dietary, of which it consists at times almost exclusively, such as mango, oranges, limes, pine - apples, and one or two native fruits.

A few natives largely cultivate European cabbages, potatoes, onions, leeks, tomatoes,

pumpkins, cucumbers, melons, saferau, and a variety of others, mostly introduced by Arab and Portuguese traders.

There is little variety in the shape of cooking utensils, both having a globular form with wide mouths. The larger, holding one to two gallons and more, is used for making the national dish, a thick porridge of Indian-corn flour or millet, as well as for boiling rice; the smaller is used for cooking the curry or relish to be eaten with the former.

Meat is generally cut into small strips, skewered on to sticks, and roasted over the ashes. It is preferred fresh, though on the river game and pork are consumed when quite putrid. Bananas are mostly eaten uncooked; vegetables are boiled in the ordinary European mode; the grasshoppers and ground-nuts are roasted on a piece of flat iron having a handle, or a shallow earthenware dish. Flour is made by pounding in a large wooden mortar shaped out of a log, and is performed exclusively by women. Cooking is the duty of the women, either wives or slaves.

The fermentation of alcoholic drinks is extensively carried on by all tribes. Beer is manu-



factured both from the fermentation of Indian corn and millet. The drink is consumed immediately after its manufacture, and is never stored. It does not possess a large percentage of alcohol, and when fresh has many food properties, though a quantity will cause intoxication. Spirits with a high percentage of alcohol are distilled from millet and the fruit of the mango: the former has a most nauseous and sickly odour, though both are largely consumed and are productive of widespread drunkenness.

The hours observed for the principal meals are eleven and five, though often in the early morning there is a light repast of fruits and roasted ground-nuts. The food is placed on the ground in large-mouthed vessels, the fingers of the right hand are used in eating, and amongst the better class the hands are washed both before and after the meal. The chief wives generally eat with the husband, the children and other wives in their own huts, the servants by themselves.

Tobacco has presumably been introduced into this country, as in Europe, by the Portuguese, though there is little trustworthy evidence as to the true origin of its introduction. The natives are inveterate smokers, commencing at a very

young age. The cultivation of tobacco is practically universal, every native having a patch of ground entirely given up to this plant. The tobacco is manufactured in two different ways. A black and strongly flavoured tobacco is made by the admixture of foreign ingredients and rolled into a ball; the other is much purer, and made up into the form of a long plait: it is of a lighter colour and better flavour.

The tobacco is consumed in three different ways,—in pipes having a bowl of earthenware neatly ornamented, and a tube of cane-grass; in the form of cigarettes enclosed in a dried plantain-leaf, a mango or orange leaf, or merely placed in the hollow of a small bamboo; as snuff, which is kept in boxes and wallets of wood and leather of varied and crudely artistic designs.

Hemp is consumed in several districts, but not to any great extent.

The manufacture of pottery gives employment to a considerable number of men and women. The variety has no characteristics different from those of other parts of Africa. The coarser kinds are used for various culinary utensils, water-jugs, and large globular vessels for brewing native

beer. The finer varieties are coloured red with oxide of iron, and are used as dishes. No potter's wheel is used, the whole operation of turning being performed by the hands. Ornamentation is generally made by scoring with a sharp-pointed stick or stamping a wicker-work pattern. After being dried in the sun, the pottery is burnt in holes dug in the ground, and then suspended in the smoke of a fire and polished with the hands. The natives, however, prefer European crockery, and owing to the inefficient means of communication now existing, the supply is considerably less than the demand. The Makanga chief possesses a full dinner-service, and European plates, cups, and dishes are to be seen in many of the houses.

Basket-work is not carried on to any great extent. Grass and young leaves of the wild dead-palm are mostly worked into mats, fishing-nets, and small and large baskets of strong but coarse workmanship.

Spears, knives, arrow-heads, rings, armlets, hoes, and axes are extensively manufactured by native blacksmiths. They are mostly covered with black oxide of iron to prevent rust. The introduction, however, of European cutlery and

ironware is fast superseding native manufactured articles.

In the more interior districts bark-cloth is largely manufactured. It is obtained from a species of fig (*Ficus ludia*). Incisions are made encircling the bark of a young tree, the bark is stripped off and beaten with heavy wooden mallets until it has acquired the proper thickness; it is then hung up to dry, its colour when new being a brownish yellow. The coarser kind is mostly used for packing produce for conveyance to market; the finer sort, which is of a reddish tinge, is often artistically embroidered with dyed threads, obtained also from the bark, and worn as clothing.

A large number of the male population are professional hunters, and most of the ivory is obtained by them. The weapons employed are large-bore flint-lock guns imported from Hamburg and Belgium. The meat obtained on hunting expeditions is cut into strips, sun-dried and smoked, and retailed in the towns in exchange for garden produce. In some districts pits are used for ensnaring large game. On the river-banks hippopotamus-traps are placed in the most commonly used tracks of these ani-

mals through the reeds. Traps for small game of several kinds are frequently met with in the bush.

Fishing is carried out with finely woven nets of grass, large wicker-baskets placed in the stream, fences built across rivulets and streams, and line-fishing.

Game is very plentiful and numerous. Herds of elephants are to be found distributed over these countries. These animals have been gradually driven from the coast, and are assembled here in enormous numbers, so that the wealth to be obtained from them will be very considerable. Buffaloes are innumerable, as well as antelopes and deer of most African species. The ostrich exists in north Undi's territories. Amongst carnivorous animals are lions, leopards, and hyenas.

Owing to the prevalence of game, most of these districts in the lowlands are infested with tsetse fly, and it will only be on their extermination that the advantages offered by these districts for extended cattle-rearing will be efficiently utilised.

## CHAPTER XV.

## PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATION.

ITS DECADENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE—SIGNS OF A BRIGHTER FUTURE—DISASTROUS RESULTS OF MAKING COLONY A PENAL SETTLEMENT—THE OUTLAWS OF THE ZAMBESI—THEIR ORIGIN AND CHARACTERISTICS—DIFFICULTIES OF ADMINISTRATORS AND OFFICIALS—CONDITIONS OF COMMUNICATION AND CONSEQUENT LOSS OF PRESTIGE NOW ALTERED—THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LABOUR QUESTION—LAXITY OF SUBORDINATE OFFICIALS—THE NECESSITY OF APPOINTING A COMPETENT ADMINISTRATOR—THE ABSENCE OF ANY CODE OF COMMERCIAL HONESTY—ITS BEARING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLONY, AND MEANS FOR ITS REINFORCEMENT—THE POSITION OF THE MUZUNGU AND ITS DELETERIOUS RESULTS—WANT OF DISCIPLINE IN THE NATIVE TROOPS AND ITS CAUSES—THE FALLACY OF AN EXCLUSIVE POLICY.

THERE are unmistakable signs that from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries the Portuguese administration of this part of Africa was not unattended with success, and was carried out with an energy and sagacity which was unfortunately allowed to lapse for more than a

century, giving place to apathy and supineness. The consequences of this lamentable derogation are only too plainly visible to the most superficial observer, and it will require most strenuous and determined efforts to absolve their Government from the stigma cast upon it by the regrettable history of the last hundred years. There are now, however, cheering evidences that the Portuguese are fully cognisant of the necessity of a renovated policy that will bring their administration in greater conformity to the neighbouring civilisation growing up around.

It is worthy of comment that during the past two or three years telegraphic communication has been established between the principal towns on the Zambesi basin; and the latest innovation of handing over the richest parts of these territories to be developed by a company, the *Companhia da Zambesia*, shows unmistakably that a new and brighter era has arisen in the administration of these regions by the Portuguese, which will do much to realise the dream of the colonists in making this province one of the wealthiest in Africa. There is, however, in this region an Augean stable which it will behove the authorities to cleanse with all possible thoroughness.

One of the chief causes that have tended so much to the detriment of this region must be put down to the fact of its having been made a penal settlement. The result of this mistaken policy has been most lamentable and disastrous. A hybrid race has come into existence, born of convict and negro parents. The intermarriage showed few or no qualifications for colonising this country. Born of vicious and negro parentage, the offspring are only remarkable for the worst qualities of supineness and sensuousness. Rare individuals possessing more force of will, devoid of patriotism, animated with brutality and ferocity, have succeeded in establishing themselves in the outlying districts, and, ignoring all constituted authority, they have made themselves independent bandits and chieftains. Collecting around them hordes of discontented natives, they have terrorised the country and effectually occupied it.

The Government, unsupported from home, and rendered helpless by the impoverished state of the colonial exchequer, have had perforce to pander to the cupidity of these outlaws, and by subsidising them with munitions of war, have been able to retain a mythical jurisdiction on the river.



The stigma attaching to this colony in the eyes of the Portuguese, as being a penal settlement, should be effectually effaced, and the greatest solicitude should be observed in the appointment of administrators and officials.

During ten years in that region, I have met many officials fully competent for their arduous tasks, and employing their best powers in striving to mitigate the paralysing obstacles to the progress of the colony. The opposition, however, that they encountered from the supineness of the half-caste population invariably forced them to give up their work in despair.

That these bastard convicts will much longer be allowed to hold the issues of this wealthy and vast region in their hands, keeping it in a condition of barbarism and uselessness in conformity to their own condition, is highly improbable.

In past years the primitive and inadequate means of communication with the interior districts tended, doubtless, in a very great measure to remove them from the immediate supervision of the central authorities, and weakened very seriously the prestige of the home Government. Now, however, that the country enjoys the

facilities of rapid communication by steam and telegraph, the Government is put in a position to effectively administrate the whole of their territories in the vicinity of the Zambesi.

Special attention should be directed to placing the question of "labour" on a sounder and more civilised basis than exists at present. There can be little doubt that the *prazo* system needs a radical reorganisation.<sup>1</sup> The problem of the "labour question" is doubtless one of the most difficult and intricate in dealing with new African regions, as well as being of the most vital importance to commerce and civilisation. Industrial schools might be formed with the greatest advantage by the local administrations, where elementary education could be given free in the most useful handicrafts, and every means used to encourage the formation of a large and more or less skilled artisan class.

A stringent system of taxation should be enforced on the native population; magisterial courts should be formed, in which more equity is observed in dealing with native questions than

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written, it is satisfactory to hear that the whole of the *prazos* on the Zambesi have been handed over to the Companhia da Zambesia, under whose management they will doubtless be efficiently and lucratively developed.

obtains, unfortunately, under existent conditions, so that encouragement should be afforded in every way to those natives who evince a disposition for industry and labour.

To a certain extent this policy is already being carried out, and many of the authorities are deserving of considerable credit for the manner in which they have striven to perform their functions under the most primitive and deterrent conditions. There has, however, been an unfortunate laxity and consequent abuses enacted by the minor officials stationed in remote districts without competent supervision or responsibility; but doubtless, under the new condition of things, the higher authorities will be in a position to enforce the proper observance of law and equity by their subordinates.

It is at this time that the home Government should appoint an administrator with tact, prestige, and sufficient progressiveness to be competent to conduct the affairs of this vast and rich country at this critical moment of its history.

The primary duty of an administrator in that part would be to ensure the equitable fulfilment of commercial and other engagements between

the white and the negro, and this alone would revolutionise trade and commerce in this country, and place them on a satisfactory and civilised standing. Without this, all attempts at innovation or improvement must necessarily be futile. In this most elementary essential of civilisation, the Portuguese on this river, both official and civil, have reached a state for which a parallel can scarcely be found in any part of the world, and it is in this alone that accrues the insolvency, barbarism, and degradation of this part of the colony.

Between white and black there exists at the present time no such thing as a bond, and no indication is shown of an appreciation of commercial honesty. There is little difficulty in tracing the origin of this lamentable state of affairs: it is certainly the Muzungu, or bastard convict, inflated with grotesque ideas of his superiority to his fellow-blacks by reason of some remote admixture of European or Goanese blood. He conceives himself also superior to every code of honesty or morality, and every well-wisher of this colony can only trust that the most strenuous and determined efforts will be made to crush out this social evil, and by

exemplary punishment enforce an observance of the commonest honesty and morality in commercial transactions both on the part of the white and the black. When once this policy is known to be inaugurated, the evil will be immediately suppressed.

Far greater supervision and discipline should be enforced with the native troops. These men, called Cypaes, are to a great extent negro convicts from the colony of Angola. From the supineness and indolence of their officers, they are permitted a licence that is productive of much ill-feeling between the Portuguese and the native population. Permitted to roam at large without the surveillance of their officers, they indulge in every form of outrage and debauchery, pillaging the indigenous people as if they were at war in an enemy's country, instead of carrying out their proper functions as guardians of peace and security. For these crimes against all sense of justice they are seldom or never punished, and such a laxity naturally serves as an incentive to indulge in the grossest forms of licentiousness and tyranny.

All blame cannot fairly be put on the junior officers, since lethargy and supineness are char-

acteristic in every grade of colonial service. The officers are underpaid, badly treated, and have continually before them almost a feeling of ignominy in holding positions in a penal settlement, and it is consequently a matter of little surprise that they are not actuated by any feeling of *esprit de corps* or interest in their profession.

The more intelligent and experienced amongst the Portuguese colonists have surely had evidence sufficiently conclusive to prove to them the utter fallacy of the exclusive policy so long pursued by them in this region. It must surely have become evident that the exclusion and restriction of alien enterprise is not only detrimental but suicidal to their best interests.

An exaggerated *amour propre*, and a fallacious credulity in their own power of building up unaided a successful colony, must surely by this time have shown them the futility of their patriotic aspiration ; and every true Portuguese patriot must now determine whether he will continue a course as effete as it is ruinous to his own cause, or whether he will accept a self-obvious fact, and prove his acumen and diplomacy in fashioning his policy to the requirements of necessity, know-

ing that only thus will he serve his best and truest interests.

The time has passed for governing this country by uneducated irresponsible subalterns, and this is a colony well deserving of the most intelligent and best of Portugal's sons. To make this country a refuse-heap for Portugal and Goa shows a want of knowledge and foresight of its vast possibilities and momentous importance to the financial future of Portugal that can only excite compassion and commiseration from the commercial world.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN NYASSALAND.

*RÉSUMÉ* OF PAST HISTORY—AFRICAN LAKES COMPANY—MISSIONS—CENTRAL AFRICAN COMPANY AND ITS TERRITORIES—THE LABOUR SUPPLY—BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY AND MR JOHNSTON—EXPLANATIONS NECESSARY—EXORBITANT TAXES AND RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE—THE POPULATION—A DARK PAGE IN THE COLONY'S HISTORY—TAXATION OF NATIVES AND MAGISTERIAL COURTS—NECESSITY OF DIPLOMACY IN ADMINISTERING THE COLONY.

HAVING offered a few criticisms on the Portuguese administration of their extensive territories in East Africa, it may not be uninteresting, and is at least in conformity with the traditional British partiality to fair-play, that the methods employed by ourselves in the administration of our new protectorate should in their turn be subjected to a critical review.

The region over which our protectorate extends, known at different times as Nyassaland,



Makolololand, Shiré highlands, and, more recently, as British Central Africa, may be assumed to be less of a *terra incognita* than it was three years ago. Notwithstanding, it may not be superfluous to offer a succinct *résumé* of its past history to facilitate our appreciation of its present conditions, and a critique on the methods employed in their fulfilment by our representatives.

The Shiré highlands were some twenty years ago occupied by the agents of a Scottish Missionary Society. A mission was established there, and some years later an attempt made to develop trade on missionary principles by the curious anomaly of a missionary trading concern called the African Lakes Company. This eccentric attempt to combine the heterogeneous offices of priest and trader met with little success financially, and the enterprise gradually devolved into a transport agency for the various local missions. Too much praise cannot, however, be accorded to the pioneer labour of this company. It is to them we owe the roads and facilities of communication that have been so effectual in the opening up of this large region. Indeed the colony itself may almost be said to owe its existence to the indomitable determination of

these pioneers during the critical stages of its early history. Many missions have settled in this region, including the Universities' Mission, the Established Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, and others.

It is to the credit of the Scottish Missions that they afforded every encouragement for the promotion of the tentative agricultural development of the country. One of their number became the first and largest coffee-grower in this district, and is at the present time one of the most successful planters. He was joined by his brothers, and their firm have obtained a prominence from their successful endeavours to promote the commercial and political wellbeing of the colony in its earlier years, and have been chiefly instrumental in directing public attention to this region as a suitable site for agricultural enterprise. Since then there have settled in the neighbourhood six coffee-planters and one trader, most of whom are on a small scale, and whose success, though promising, is still *in nubibus*.

The African Lakes Company, previously mentioned, though practically a transport agency, have made some experiments in agriculture.

The Central African Company, whose work and

prospects are more fully described elsewhere, and who are territorial owners of a large area of British territory on the west of the Shiré, possess the richest and most valuable sites for cultivation and agriculture. We need not therefore, for our present purpose, include in our summary of the individual and private commercial interests either of these companies—more especially the Central African, on whom, doubtless, will devolve the preponderance of the agricultural and commercial wealth of the protectorate; and in speaking of the Shiré highlands—viz., the British territory east of the Shiré river—it should be understood that the disadvantages obtaining in them are wholly wanting in the neighbouring territories, owned by the Central African Company, who possess the most happy facilities for ensuring the successful commercial development of their part of the colony.

The Shiré highlands east of the Shiré river may be described as a broken plateau of about nine thousand square miles, on the summit of a mountainous block from two thousand to three thousand feet above the sea. It is well watered during the rains. Cultivation is only at present carried out in the vicinity of the perennial

streams, and, owing to their paucity, the area available for successful coffee-cultivation is necessarily, under present conditions, not unrestricted.

The immediate possibilities of agricultural development in the lowlands of the Shiré valley, and more especially the territory on the west owned by the Central African Company, both by reason of the abundance of cheap labour and water-supply, are, however, greater and more important. Indeed, though there is abundant evidence of the bright agricultural future of these regions, it must nevertheless be borne in mind that their effective and possible development is essentially *in futuro*.

The relations existing between the foreign British element and the indigenous native population have been hitherto, with a few unimportant exceptions, most cordial and satisfactory, and have necessarily assisted very greatly the operations of our agricultural pioneers.

It is worthy of comment that, notwithstanding the extremely small number of planters, the question of labour-supply is one of the most absorbent and important of the difficulties attending the successful development of coffee-growing. The number of labourers obtainable

in the vicinity is so limited as to be insignificant in comparison to the demand. As a remedy, planters have been forced to enter into engagements with native tribes at the enormous distances of from one to five hundred miles. This naturally entails considerable expense, apart from the fact that, even at these distances, the amount of labour procurable is threatened with gradual but appreciable diminution. Indeed there is nothing that will tend more effectually to restrict the development of this industry than the difficulties accruing from the existing inefficient labour-supply. At no season of the year is there sufficient labour obtainable to satisfy the most ordinary demands of a moiety of the few planters scattered over the highlands. On the most carefully conducted estates the planters are put to extraordinary shifts to enable them to perform the necessary work with half the hands required, while smaller planters have on many occasions been obliged to desist altogether for weeks at a time from attending to their plantations.

Under such conditions it is in the highest degree culpable to encourage the immigration of intending agriculturists into this region until this

grave question of labour has been satisfactorily solved. The problem of obtaining a satisfactory solution to these grave difficulties is, though by no means an easy task, still capable, under an efficient administration, of being rapidly and effectively solved. And the settlement of the labour question is surely the first and most important duty devolving on an official administrator, since on it depends the success or failure of the agricultural future of this rich region.

It is unwise to ignore the palpable fact that this is a colony requiring the utmost consideration and tenderest nurture during its present infantile stage. And when it is recognised that not only the interest and life-labour of our pioneer countrymen, but also the wellbeing and advancement of many thousands of our black fellow-subjects, are necessarily imperilled by a maladministration, it necessarily devolves upon us to demand that our representatives in that part should perform their functions in a manner conformable with our ideas of what is right and just, not only to our own interests but those of our new subjects.

With this object in view, it is of the greatest interest to investigate the course pursued during

the past year by our representatives, and to discover to what a degree they have shown the worthiness of the important and onerous trust imposed upon them, and how they have succeeded in carrying out the philanthropic and civilising policy they were deputed to represent.

It has been judged expedient, to ensure the consummation of our colonial and humanitarian policy, to invest in a single official, under the title of Commissioner, powers of the most vague and undefined nature, giving him almost *carte blanche* in the work of furthering our policy.

Mr Rhodes, at the second annual meeting of the shareholders of the British South Africa Company, states: "I have already mentioned Mr Commissioner Johnston, who is administering our northern possessions known as British Central Africa." (The territory conferred on the company by charter is, however, considerably to the south of the Zambesi.) "This enormous territory is under this company's *direct administration*, Mr Johnston being our *representative*. He is also Imperial Commissioner for Nyassaland. The administration of this latter area, though under an Imperial Commission, is entirely at our expense, and the reversion is with

us. The company received a charter covering North as well as South Zambesia, and by an arrangement with her Majesty's Government Mr Johnston was sent to be commissioner in that portion of the territory which lies along the shores of Lake Nyassa. It is not a case of her Majesty's Government paying the Charter Company to govern the territory, but it is a case of the company assisting the Government; and we are paying £10,000 per annum, which is spent on the protectorate along the shores of Lake Nyassa."

So much for Mr Rhodes. Her Majesty's Government, however, have emphatically denied that her Majesty's Government is subsidised by this trading company. The annual payment of £10,000, however, is expended in the maintenance of a force of police, and the objects for which these police are used should require a searching investigation. On the surface the payment and maintenance of these troops by a trading company would naturally presuppose an obligation that some return should be made to the company for their expenditure in the interest of the shareholders. In view of this, it may not be out of place to make certain



comments on suppositions which naturally arise under such untoward conditions, and for which we may be justified in demanding some explanations.

Notwithstanding that this company possess in other parts of Africa considerably more territory than their funds admit of their developing, it appears to have been considered necessary, in the interest of the shareholders and for the encouragement of the investing public, to endeavour to acquire further large tracts of territory in our new protectorate. Finding that the ordinary method employed by British subjects in acquiring property was too extended and tedious, the possibility of consummating their object through abnormal powers acquired from the Government would naturally commend itself. Certain proceedings, among which was the influencing, by weight of his position, many of the native landowners from exercising their undoubted rights of entering into land transactions either to purchase or sell with any European but himself, should certainly require some explanation. Could they possibly be intended to debar any Europeans or others from being able to compete in open market with the company from whom he received the subsidy,

thus enabling it most expeditiously and cheaply to acquire for its shareholders the most suitable tracts in this region?—ignoring the palpable fact that, if such operations were enacted, they were wholly contrary to the most superficial commercial justice, and, by discouraging local enterprise, tended very seriously to the detriment of the colony.

Apparently wholly oblivious of the financial conditions of the colony, taxes, restrictions, prohibitive bylaws, and other vexatious proceedings, were without warning imposed on the wretched colonists and natives, who were suddenly called upon to bear the expense of an administration that would have taxed the resources of a long-established and wealthy community.

When we consider the disadvantages from primitive and other conditions against which this colony has barely been able to struggle, and how in other parts of the world we have found it the wisest policy to assist in every way, under much more favourable conditions, those who are colonising a new country, we can only deplore the policy of our representative in thus imposing heavy and almost prohibitive restrictions to the development of this large but primitive country.

Amongst many happily abortive tentative schemes for administration, was one for reconstructing all purchases of land, and making a charge of at least one shilling an acre—a price quite inconsistent with its true present value.

The restrictions and exorbitant taxes placed on the ivory trade can have no possible effect in diminishing the export of this valuable product, but will merely be effectual in relegating exclusively this lucrative trade to Arab, Portuguese, and Germans, to the exclusion of ourselves.

It is not intended in this place to enlarge otherwise than generally on the reported grievances of our colonists under this administration. And we may direct our further attention to the policy with regard to the interest of the huge native population.

Although the aggregate number of the people inhabiting this region is by no means inconsiderable, the country generally to a new-comer would not convey the impression of being densely populated. Over large districts the traveller oftentimes passes days without encountering any greater signs of habitation than are offered by a few rare and isolated groups of one or two huts. On the water-ways, however, he will find the banks and

immediate vicinity thickly crowded with native villages and gardens.

The people to be considered in our administration of this protectorate may be roughly placed under four categories,—the Arab, the Swahili and Swahilised native, the warlike tribes, and peaceful tribes.

The pure Arab is seldom to be found in these districts.

The Swahili, as the name infers, is a native of African parentage inhabiting the coast-line, more particularly in the vicinity of Zanzibar. Infused in a more or less appreciable degree with Arab blood, he has acquired the trading proclivities of the Arab, and for the most part carries out the functions of trading agent to them and British-Indian subjects resident on the coast. He is mostly ignorant and fanatic, possessing few of the best idiosyncrasies of the Arabs, whom he strives to affect, while his relations with his fellow-negroes are conspicuous for the gross brutality and callousness so often characteristic of a hybrid negro race. It is the Swahili, then, whom we must charge with those fearful divergencies from the commonest dictates of humanity, and the fearful crimes perpetrated by him, which have

been so assiduously imputed to the Arab. And it is through the instrumentality of the Arab as our ally that we shall be in a position to most effectually and firmly grapple with this social hydra of slavery.

The native tribes with whom the Swahili trader and slave-dealer is brought in contact often evince an unfortunate readiness to acquire the unenviable characteristics of these bastard negroes.

As the Swahili affects the Arab, so many natives, from, if possibly, a lower standpoint, affect the coastman, and many tribes of these Swahilised natives are to be found on the caravan routes in the neighbourhood of Nyassa, imbued with the more degrading and lower morality of the coast negroes they strive to imitate.

Few Europeans appear to appreciate the expediency of observing the most common accuracy in discriminating between the wholly different characteristics of the Arab and Swahilised negroes, and have effectually succeeded in misleading European opinion as to their true respective positions in Africa.

The third class, comprising the heterogeneous population of British Central Africa, are the war-like tribes—natives assimilated to the great Zulu

race. They are chiefly known as the Magangwara and Angoni. They are essentially a marauding and slaving people, and are the procurators of slaves, both for their own use and for traffic with the coast traders, and it is to these that attention should be strenuously directed in the initiatory attempts to combat this pernicious traffic.

Lastly are the peaceful and purely agricultural races, who, from a deficiency in power of social organisation, make themselves a lucrative and facile prey to their aggressive neighbours.

Our representatives entered upon their new functions with a zealous and impetuous energy. The colony was quickly embroiled in a succession of conflicts and disasters, which, with their consequent humiliation and loss of prestige, must seriously menace for a considerable period the wellbeing of the whole community.

Through an exaggerated and fallacious idea of the comparative strength of the meagre but courageous band of Indian troops under his command, our representative aroused with a placid but fatuous *nonchalance* the animosity and active hostility of the most powerful and hitherto friendly tribes—oblivious apparently that very

high qualifications for newspaper reporting and sketching do not necessarily confer military genius and acumen. The decimation of the gallant little force was not allowed with such *sang-froid*, let us hope, as to satisfy an artistic craving expressed a short time ago that some one at least might "die picturesquely in Africa."

The history of this colony from its earliest days furnishes no parallel to the loss of British lives, marking the initiatory results of this administration, nor has its darkest page shown such a mournful record of death and humiliation as has unfortunately been achieved during the past year.

With a reckless and suicidal disregard to local conditions and exigencies, old bonds of friendship existing between the colonists and their neighbours have been severed and ignored. Promises given in the Queen's name, and their fulfilment implicitly trusted in by the recipients, have been on occasions ruthlessly abrogated,—a phase of administrative morality that must rapidly and irretrievably destroy the universal dogma religiously held by the natives, that an Englishman's word was the most honourable and trustworthy bond.

Tribute, under the misnomer of subsidy, has been lavishly offered to the most notorious slave-dealers. The Angoni, who have been devastating thousands of square miles of territory, slaving and raiding, are allowed to continue their marauding proclivities unchecked.

Finally convinced, however, of the utter futility and disastrous results of ill-judged attacks on neighbouring and hitherto friendly tribes, but too late to retire in a manner conformable to any semblance of dignity, our representative's attention is next directed to the peoples who for many years have flocked to the vicinity of the settlements for British protection against their oppressors. For centuries these unfortunates have been the defenceless victims of the cruellest phases of the slave traffic, and it was only on our advent in that region that they found by proximity to the colonists an immunity from their harassed lot. They have shown themselves a peaceful and agricultural people, but live a life of chronic and oftentimes distressful poverty. It is from these that our representative now made strenuous endeavours to recuperate the expenses of this administration, and to refund the large salaries given



indiscriminately to his heterogeneous followers. Exorbitant taxes were levied at a time when the greater part of the people were suffering the severest pangs of famine.

Magisterial courts were formed, presided over by artisans and others. The judgments resulting were sometimes carried out in a manner worthy of the traditions of an Eastern Kadi.

Theft by some person unknown occurring on a public highway was punished by our sapient authorities by the wholesale destruction of the unfortunate villages in the vicinity, rendering the inhabitants homeless, and subjecting them to the loss of their all in the name of British law and dignity, as interpreted by its new-fledged exponents. It is deplorable to suppose that the relations built up during so many years between our pioneers and native populations in so satisfactory a manner will be allowed to be rendered futile by such a misdirection of administrative energy.

In a few words, this colony is still in too infantile a stage to make it expedient to restrict its struggling commercial and agricultural development. Indeed every effort should be made by our local authorities to advance and encour-

age its interests by affording it every practicable facility.

To tax the native population for several years to come, shows a want of appreciation of inherent conditions that meets with the unqualified disapproval of every one with experience of this part of Africa.

To embroil the community in quarrels and wars with all the surrounding native tribes cannot but prove disastrous to the best interests of the community. It is, moreover, as erroneous as it is immature, since experience has distinctly proved that, under conditions similar to those obtaining in this region, a peaceful policy of diplomacy is more effectual in opening up these new countries than abortive attempts at filibustering; and the advent of a diplomatist, and one experienced in African policy, is urgently needed to ensure the rapid and efficient development of these vast and rich regions.

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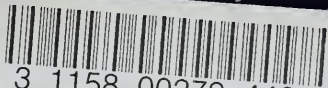
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